

Vermont Connecting to Collections LG-41-08-0002-08

Project Title: Vermont Connecting to Collections (planning grant)

Partners: Vermont Historical Society, Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance, Vermont Department of Libraries, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, Vermont State Archives.

Project Summary: The goals of the Vermont Connecting to Collections project were to survey collecting institutions in the state, analyze the survey findings, publicize the results, and work with the institutions and stakeholders to write a final report that can be used to advocate for the needs of Vermont's collecting institutions.

A survey was sent to over 700 Vermont cultural institutions that care for collections. Almost 300 institutions responded to the survey. An analysis of the findings was prepared by a consultant and a summary of the findings was written by the project director. The findings were presented at a summit held on June 24, 2009. Both the consultant's report and the summary report are available on the VHS website. A final report in a brochure format summarizing the survey findings was prepared. Ten copies were mailed to all survey participants; all of the 700 collecting institutions in the state received a copy as did all members of the Vermont Legislature. Project partners received 250 copies for distribution.

Overall the goals of the project have been met and collections care professionals, volunteers, boards of trustees, communities, and governmental officials have a tool for promoting and informing the public about the condition and special needs of Vermont's collections.

The Vermont Connecting to Collections Project

The Vermont Connecting to Collections Project officially began on April 1, 2008 and originally was scheduled to end on March 30, 2009. Project Director, Jacqueline Calder, requested and received a one year extension on the project. The extension was requested because of the economic downturn. The original schedule for the project called for a summit to take place in March 2009 and it was clear that many of the people that we wanted to invite would be in the middle of deciding government budgetary issues. The Advisory Committee decided that it would be better to re-schedule the summit for June 2009 when there would hopefully be a better understanding of what was happening with the economy.

Up to that point the project was on schedule. During the spring of 2008 the Advisory Committee met and consultant Susie Wilkening began formulating the online survey. Summer interns Laura Brill, a 2008 graduate of the New York University Conservation Program and Emily Voss, a first year student at the Cooperstown Graduate Program, SUNY Oneonta, were hired.

The Advisory Committee met on May 15, 2008 to review and revise the survey draft questions prepared by Wilkening. Interns Brill and Voss began working at VHS on May 27, 2008. They reviewed the survey draft questions and discussed their recommended revisions with Calder, Corcoran and Wilkening. A draft of the survey was uploaded onto Zoomerang, the online survey

Vermont Connecting to Collections LG-41-08-0002-08

provider, and made available for testing by the Advisory Committee and the interns. The interns began developing contact lists from databases provided by VHS, VMGA, the Vermont Department of Libraries (DOL), and the Vermont State Archives. They also developed a page on the VHS website for information about the project, for the link to the survey on Zoomerang, and the pdf version of the survey that participants could download. Libraries, historical societies, municipal clerks, museums, and county court houses were notified that the survey would be sent in June and given an overview of the project through the newsletters and on line information networks available through advisory committee members.

The survey was launch on June 16, 2008. An explanatory cover letter and the survey were sent out to 775 institutions, half via e-mail and the other half were contacted via regular mail. Recipients were given the email addresses and telephone number of the interns to contact for questions. On June 21 and 22, 2008, the interns attended VHS's Vermont History Expo where over 100 historical societies and museums present exhibits and programs. They visited with these organizations explaining the purpose of the project and handed out more surveys. This was an excellent opportunity for them to meet recipients, publicize the upcoming regional meetings, and find out about new contacts for the survey.

The interns planned and organized the six regional informational meetings. The meetings were held in Manchester, Woodstock, St. Johnsbury, Barre, St. Albans, and Shelburne. Information about the meetings was sent out via email and mail and put onto advisory committee members' websites. A special mailing was sent out to all state legislators inviting them to attend a meeting closest to them. Unfortunately, no legislators came to the meetings though one did send a letter of support. A press release was sent out to Vermont media outlets and some coverage was given in two Vermont newspapers, *Seven Days* and the *St. Albans Messenger*. Each meeting was two hours long. It was introduced with the DVD about the HHI and then a PowerPoint presentation was given by either Eileen Corcoran (VMGA), Calder (VHS), Brill or Voss about the Vermont project. This was followed by two to three presentations from people working in libraries, museums, municipal offices, or historical societies from the region, talking about collections projects they had completed. A question and answer session ended the meeting. The interns also provided a resource table for participants that included funding sources and information about collections care. Participants who came to these meetings were very enthusiastic and very complimentary about their colleagues' presentations. Attendance was not what we had hoped for ranging from a high of 27 people at St. Johnsbury to a low of seven in St. Albans.

During the rest of their tenure the interns answered questions, entered completed paper surveys into Zoomerang, and contacted survey recipients via email and telephone to encourage them to complete the survey. Advisory committee members used their various information networks to remind recipients to complete the survey. The interns traveled around the state visiting over forty libraries, museums, historical societies, municipal offices, and county courts and encouraged survey participation, answered questions, took photographs of sites participating in the survey, and gathered anecdotal information to use in the final survey report. Brill and Voss prepared a final report and a PowerPoint overview of the project to date. They presented the overview to an advisory committee meeting on August 12, 2008.

On August 21, 2008, Calder presented the interns' PowerPoint presentation to IMLS director Anna Imelda Radice at the Shelburne Museum. The work done by the interns was exemplary and the

Vermont Connecting to Collections LG-41-08-0002-08

success of the survey return was due to their hard work and dedication to the project. The advisory board unanimously agreed that the use of graduate level interns may be one of the most cost effective ways to serve Vermont's collecting institutions in the future.

The deadline for completing the survey was August 31, 2008 and 292 of the 775 institutions that were sent a survey completed it, an amazing 37.8 % return rate. During September and October, Susie Wilkening began analyzing survey results. She presented her initial findings to the advisory committee at a meeting on October 22, 2008 and submitted her written report in February 2009.

Vermont's findings are very similar to the findings of the HHI. The majorities of institutions don't have emergency plans (67%); don't have a staff person with collections responsibility, and many collections environments are not up to basic standards. Most dramatically different from HHI, though not unexpected, is the budget size of the institutions responsible for Vermont collections. Of the institutions that answered the survey 68% had budgets of less than \$100,000.00 (31% have budgets less than \$5,000; 17% with budgets between \$5,000 and \$25,000). According to Wilkening, Vermont has one of the highest densities of collecting institutions per capita in the country (46.5 per 100,000). This is reflective of Vermont's small town rural character where almost every town has a library, historical society, and municipal clerk.

One positive note from the survey was that institutions that had worked with VMGA were aware of collections care standards and had been progressively working on improving the environments and storage facilities of their organizations. It is clear that Vermont needs to continue to follow the successful VMGA model in helping small primarily volunteer run collecting institutions learn about standards of care. Unfortunately, at this date VMGA's economic viability is in question and their one staff person has been let go.

The Advisory Committee met on March 31, 2009 to make plans for the summit, to discuss the findings and the future of the Vermont Connecting to Collections project. The committee was sent final written summary and PowerPoint program for review and comment before they were presented at the summit. VHS staff worked with the committee to prepare a database of invitees, consisting of funders, government officials, community leaders, and survey participants. Over 700 invitations were sent via email and another 150 were sent by regular mail. Materials on the survey findings and the summit were sent out to media outlets to publicize the project and the ongoing needs of Vermont's collecting institutions.

The Connecting to Collections Summit was held in Montpelier on June 24, 2009. In addition to presentations on the VT Connecting to Collections Project, representatives from other cultural organizations spoke about their institutions collections care efforts. Two librarians from the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, Bob Joly and Lisa Van Kann, described their long term strategic plans and implementations for the preservation of their historic building and their successful collaboration with other cultural institutions to catalog and provide access to archival collections in their community. Brian Lindner, a historian and volunteer at the Waterbury Historical Society, very frankly described the history of the Dr. Henry Janes Collection, a nationally significant archive of a Civil War surgeon, owned by the society. Janes, a native of Waterbury, bequeathed his home and papers to the community. Because of a lack of security some of the collection was stolen and sold over time by a volunteer. When the society discovered the theft and a few years later tried to recover the documents, they couldn't prove ownership because they hadn't been cataloged. The man who purchased the papers refused to return them to the vulnerable Waterbury Historical

Vermont Connecting to Collections LG-41-08-0002-08

Society but instead donated them to another public institution where he felt they were more secure and accessible. The Society now keeps the remainder of the collection in a secure vault and is in the process of catalog them for better accessibility. It was a cautionary tale that was of great interest to many in the audience that have important collections that aren't cataloged and are in need of better security procedures.

The keynote speaker was David Donath, President of the Billings Farm and Museum and Woodstock Foundation, and currently the chairman of the American Association of State and Local History. Donath described the leadership efforts of AASLH to get federally funded block grants distributed to states for re-granting to their local institutions for their day to day needs, especially collections care. Projects like Vermont Connecting to Collections were vital for gathering information to make the case for the need of these block grants. Donath emphasized that museums and historical societies must follow the lead of libraries in setting minimum standards and benchmarks to assess the progress and improvement in collections management in order to secure and then maintain ongoing federal support.

The findings of the Vermont Connecting to Collection Project were given by former intern on the project, Laura Brill, and project director, Jacqueline Calder. Brill reviewed the history of the project and how the survey was conducted. Calder, the final speaker of the day, presented a summary of the findings of the survey and the initial recommendations of the Advisory Committee. The audience also received a written copy of the summary report.

At the end of Calder's presentation the audience asked questions of the speakers. After a brief break the audience was divided into three groups that represented the types of institutions surveyed: museums and historical societies; libraries and archives; and municipal offices and courts. Each group was lead by a member of the Advisory Committee and asked their response to the findings of the survey and the recommendations. All groups agreed with the survey recommendations but emphasized their need for assistance with the other great needs of their organizations: improvements of environments and security; and cataloging to improve access and intellectual control of their collections. Many of the organizations were clear that the professional assistance they received in the past from VMGA was a key in the progress within their institutions and that same type of help would be needed in the future.

The summit was felt to be a great success by all who attended. Unfortunately, the numbers were not what were hoped for with just over seventy-five people attending. The overwhelming majority of attendees represented cultural institutions with few funders or state representatives. The press did give the summit excellent coverage. Two reporters stayed for the entire meeting. One was from Vermont Public Radio. He reported on the summit and included interviews with some of the speakers on a popular program that was air during the afternoon. The Sunday after the summit, the other reporter wrote an extensive article with photographs that was published on the front pages of two of Vermont's major newspapers, the *Rutland Herald* and the *Times Argus*.

One of the last steps in the project was the preparation of a public printed summary report on the findings of the survey to promote the needs of cultural institutions. A request was made to IMLS to make some budget changes to allow for the shifting of some monies to pay Laura Brill (\$800) and Julie Nelson (\$360) to design, write, and edit this final piece. These changes were approved by IMLS in August 2009.

Vermont Connecting to Collections LG-41-08-0002-08

5,000 copies of this published summary were printed. Ten copies each were mailed to the survey participants (292), a copy was sent to each cultural institution (770) in the state and to each member of the Vermont legislature and legislative staff (over 300) and all of the project partners were given copies (250 each) for distribution. All were asked to use the piece to promote their individual collections care needs and to help raise awareness of this issue in their communities. The information collected during the project, summarized in the brochure, will provide detailed information about Vermont's collections care needs when organizations ask their communities for help or apply to funders.

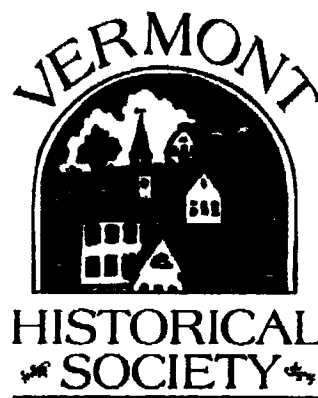
Overall the project was a success in the gathering raw data about the status of Vermont collecting institutions and analyzing that information. The three documents that were produced (the consultant report, the summary report, and the final report brochure) provide detailed information that is easily understood and accessed. They can be used as tools for planning, to help raise awareness, and for fundraising.

The Connecting to Collections project partners (VHS, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, Vermont Department of Libraries, and Vermont State Archives) have a good working relationship and we will try to partner on future collections projects when possible. Unfortunately, one of the original partners VMGA is no longer operating because it ran out of funding.

There was great interest in the project by the collecting institutions as demonstrated by the large number that responded to the survey (over 37%). The interns found, during their on-site visits, that these institutions were eager for any help they could get with collections care. As the survey showed most of the institutions had small budgets and were run by volunteers that needed basic information about collections care.

Public awareness of this issue was not as successful as we hoped. There was good coverage of the project at the summit but little after that time. The economic crisis pushed this issue even further into the background and many of the institutions with collections are struggling to survive. The demise of VMGA, whose primary mission was collections care, will be sorely missed, especially by small institutions.

Statewide funding, like the IMLS's Connecting to Collections grants, will be important to the future success of any collections care initiative in Vermont. With so many small volunteer organizations it will take the leadership from the project partners to continue this initiative and raise awareness of the dire needs of the state's cultural heritage collections. Each partner organization does work closely with their respective constituencies. Since collections care issues are shared by all of these organizations it is more effective in cost and staff time to join together in statewide projects. As funding is available we will continue to work on improving collections care in Vermont.



Vermont's Heritage at Risk:

Findings and Preliminary Recommendations of the Vermont Connecting to Collections Project

Introduction

In 2003, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) funded Heritage Preservation, the National Institute for Preservation, to check on the condition of collections in America's museums and libraries. The startling 2005 report, written from the findings of a national survey, is appropriately titled, *A Public Trust at Risk: The Heritage Health Index Report on the State of America's Collections* (to see the report go www.heritagepreservation.org/hhi/full.html).

What were the findings? Twenty-six percent of collecting institutions do not have environmental controls to protect their collections from damaging effects of temperature, humidity, and light. Improper storage has led to damage of collections in 65% of surveyed institutions. Most surprising, in this age of heightened security, was the discovery that over 80% of collecting institutions do not have an emergency plan that includes collections.

In order for collections to survive and enrich Americans into the 21st century the Heritage Health Index (HHI) report recommended that the following actions must be taken:

- *Institutions must give priority to providing **safe conditions** for the collections they hold in trust.*
- *Every collecting institution must develop an **emergency plan** to protect its collections.*
- *Every institution must **assign responsibility** for caring for collections to members of its staff.*

- *Individuals at all levels of government and in the private sector must assume responsibility for **providing the support** that will allow these collections to survive.*

Additionally, IMLS started another initiative with its Connecting to Collection program, funding statewide projects to find out about the specific needs of individual states. The Vermont Connecting to Collections Project is one of those statewide initiatives.

The Vermont Connecting to Collections Project

Vermonters have always taken great pride and interest in their heritage. During the last 50 years communities have founded historical societies and museums to collect artifacts and documents to preserve local cultural heritage. Libraries also flourished during the last century and many serve as the repository for local history collections. In the public sector, all municipal clerks maintain and preserve local legal records and have accumulated vast land records. State probate courts in Vermont's 14 counties house personal estate and other legal archives. Consequently, the majority of Vermont's cultural and historical memory is cared for by 300 historical societies, historic sites, and museums; 186 public and 24 academic libraries; 248 municipal offices; and 18 probate courts.

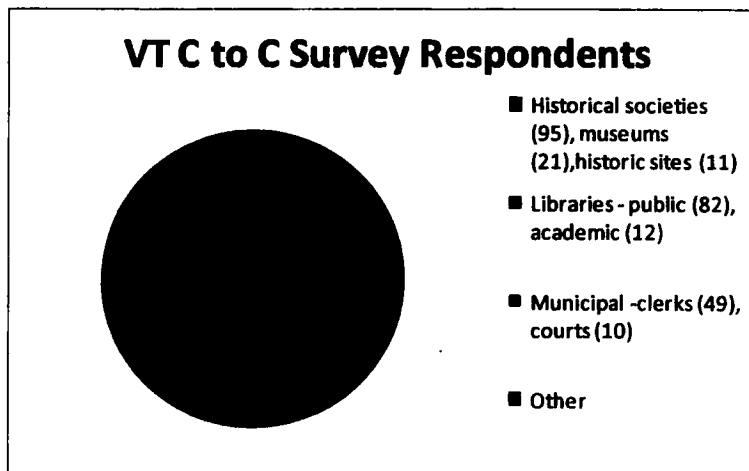
In 2008, the Vermont Historical Society (VHS), with a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Service's Connecting to Collection program, undertook the task of discovering the status of collections care at these various private and public institutions. The Vermont Connecting to Collections Project (VT CtoC) is a partnership of VHS, the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance (VMGA), the Vermont Department of Libraries (VDoL), the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP), and the Vermont State Archives (VSA). To gather information a survey was distributed, asking these various collecting institutions about the care and condition of the collections they hold in public trust. The findings of the survey are shocking. Vermont's cultural heritage is at risk, not only from physical deterioration and destruction, but from loss of intellectual control. What follows are the findings of the survey and the recommendations of how we, as Vermont citizens, professional and volunteer, can help our local and state institutions take care of these invaluable materials.

The VT CtoC Advisory Committee, comprised of staff from partnering organizations and interested professionals, met in May 2008 to discuss how to implement plans and to review draft survey questions. The survey was sent in mid-July 2008 to 776 Vermont collecting institutions via electronic and regular mail. Two graduate student interns answered respondents' questions and helped them complete the survey either online or on paper. They coordinated and organized six regional workshops to promote and explain the project and traveled around the state to various collecting institutions, gathering anecdotal materials and taking photographs. When the survey closed at the beginning of September 2008, 292 institutions had completed the survey for

a very successful 37.6% return rate. Susie Wilkening, an independent consultant with experience writing and analyzing surveys, completed her report on in March 2009. (To see Wilkening's report go to www.vermonthistory.org).

Who Answered the Survey?

Institutionally, the respondents self-identified as shown in the following chart. The 292 survey respondents represent a broad range of institutions: from large professionally staffed museums and libraries such as the Shelburne Museum and Bailey Howe Library's Special Collections at the University of Vermont; medium-sized town offices and historical societies with a few paid staff such as Barre City and the Woodstock Historical Society; and small historical societies and museums

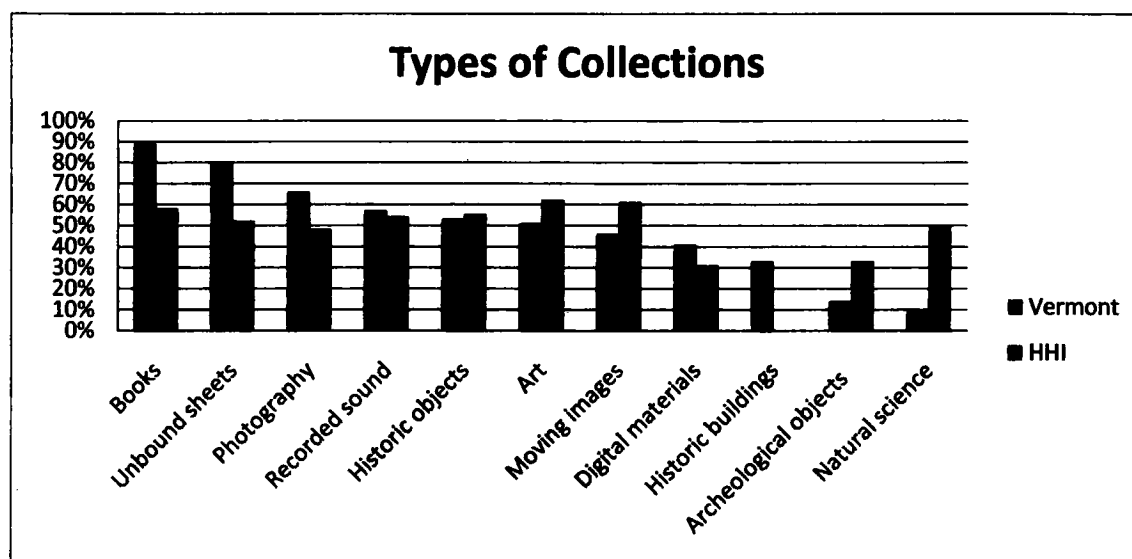


such as Rokeby Museum and the Brattleboro Historical Society, run by part-time paid or all volunteer staff. Responses came from all counties in the state with the highest number of responses coming from Windsor County (40) and the lowest from Essex County (5).

Many of the HHI and VT CtoC survey questions were the same, but results cannot always be compared directly because of the inclusion of Vermont's municipal clerks and probate courts. Some comparisons of the Vermont to HHI findings reflect the type of institutions that own collections in Vermont. Vermont had more than double the number of historical societies responding to the survey (28%) than did HHI (11%). Of Vermont's respondents, 52% are non-profits, 35% are municipal or county agencies, and 6% were state or academic institutions. In contrast, in the HHI sample, 42% were non-profits and 17% were academic institutions. Vermont also has a higher percentage of institutions identifying as having more than one function (80%), such as an historical society with an archive, compared to the national survey (67%).

What Do These Institutions Have in Their Collections?

The following table shows the types of collections owned by Vermont institutions compared to the national HHI survey.

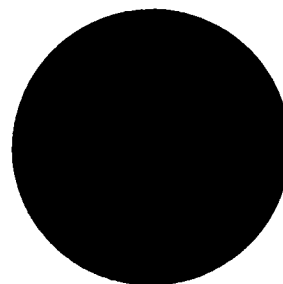


Since municipal clerks and courts were included in the Vermont survey, it is not surprising that Vermont has a significantly higher percentage of paper-based materials compared to the national sample. Significantly, 33% of the Vermont's institutions own historic buildings, a question not asked by HHI.

Vermont's libraries for the most part do not define themselves as collecting institutions in the same way as the other institutions that responded to the survey, and most do not consider collections care a primary part of their mission. But because of their often long-term and historic standing in a community, they have become the default repository for important collections. When asked, many libraries indicated that they own considerable numbers of non-book collections. Caring for these collections poses challenges for already overburdened public libraries.

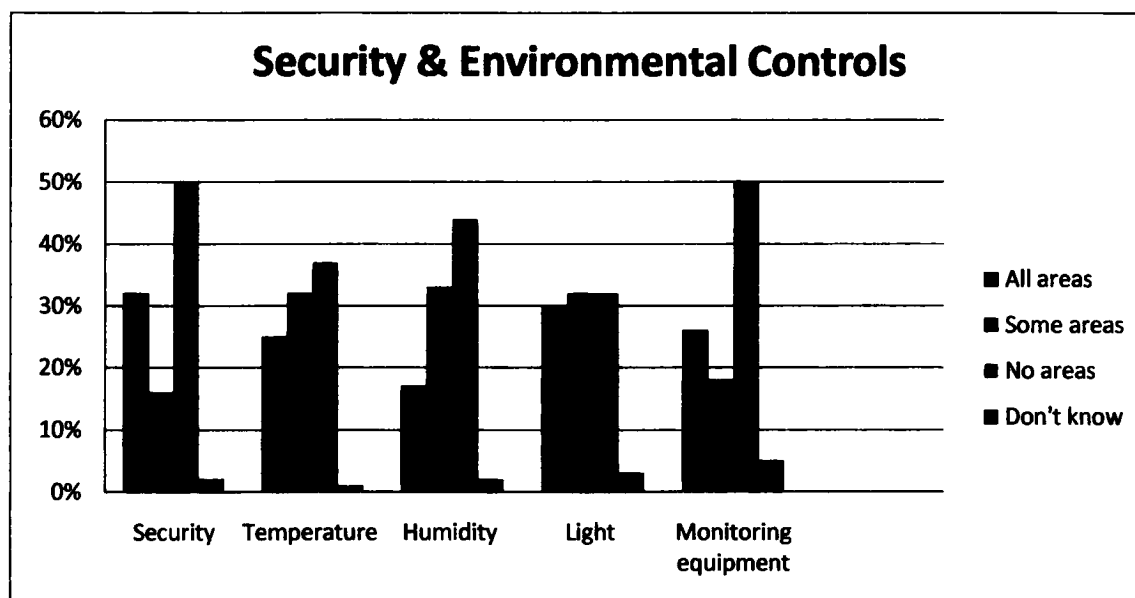
As one librarian commented in the survey, "We are not funded to take care of historical collections and hardly have the funds to do our day-to-day business."

VT Public Library Collections Other Than Books

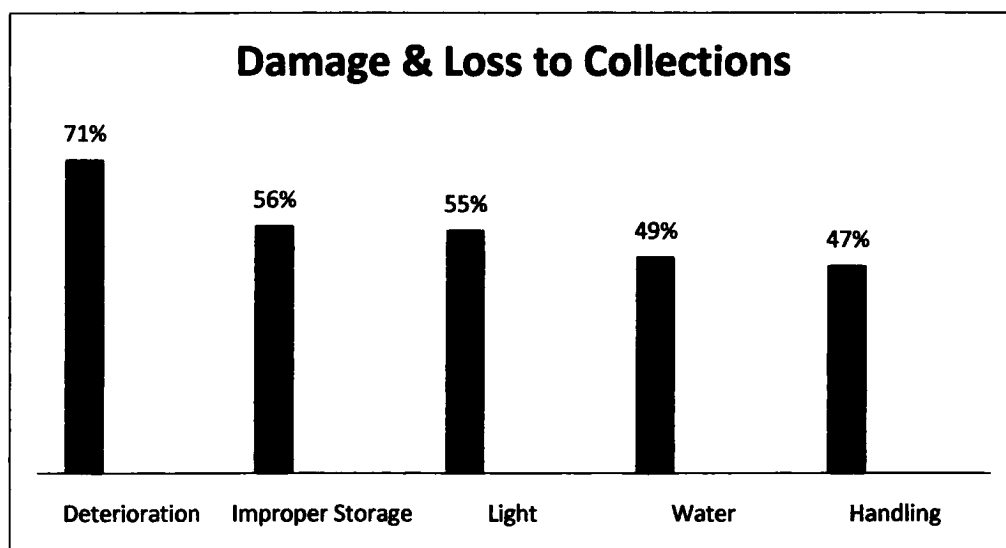


Condition of Collections

Institutions were asked about current storage conditions, security, environmental controls, collections needs, and loss or damage that has happened to collections in the past. Vermont is fortunate in that it usually does not have to deal with major disasters such as hurricanes, tornados, or earthquakes. Fires and floods have taken their toll in Vermont, but mostly in relatively short-term events. More damaging to collections is the insidious day-to-day deterioration that takes place due to poor storage and environmental conditions. Improper handling and cramped storage; fading and weakening of materials due to excessive light; mold growth from high humidity and temperatures; and cracking, checking, and buckling as a result of short-term dramatic temperature and humidity changes are common problems. The chart that follows shows that the majority of institutions do not have sufficient environmental controls to protect their collections.



The lack of environmental controls has a direct relationship for the causes of damage and loss to collections as illustrated by institutional responses in the graph below.



On the positive side, Vermont institutions have relatively high percentages of responses of “no losses” due to fire (88%) and vandalism (81%).

Vermont’s findings are on par with the national HHI survey and are cause for major concern. Further refinement of information revealed that 19% of all Vermont institutions have no temperature, humidity, or light controls in storage areas. Of these respondents, 44% are public libraries and 24% are historical societies. Additionally, these organizations generally have no collections planning documents and 40% have budgets under \$5,000 a year. This reflects a disturbing amount of threat to Vermont collections, with significant proportions of collections not housed in secure and environmentally safe environments—especially at the smallest institutions. With only 26% of all areas having monitoring equipment in, which is key in determining how to control environmental conditions, Vermont institutions need help in setting priorities and planning.

Since 70% of Vermont institutions own the facilities where their collections are housed adding security systems, environmental controls, improved light levels, and the additional storage space many need seems like an overwhelming task especially since 52% have budgets less than \$25,000.

Collections Planning

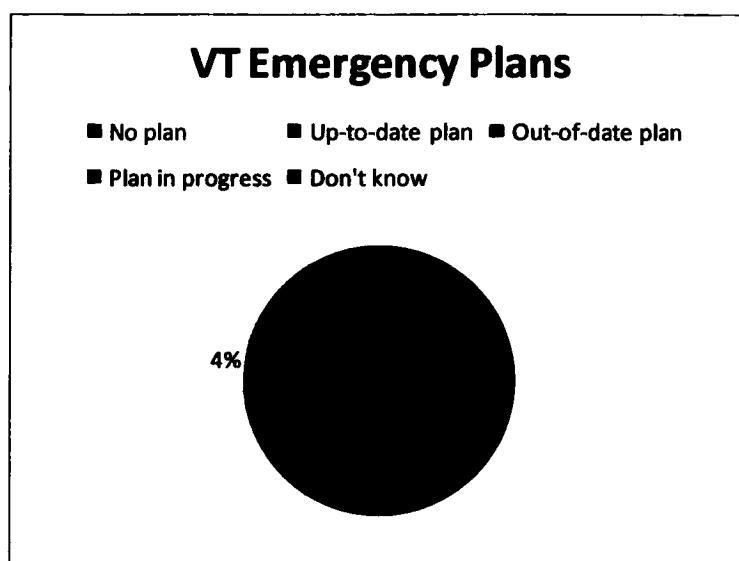
The Vermont Connecting to Collections survey asked a series of questions to determine how great a priority collections are to collecting organizations, and whether organizations are making plans to properly care for their collections into the future and to plan for possible future disasters.

Two-thirds of Vermont organizations responded that collections preservation is supported by their mission, while 25% said it is not and 10% did not know. Of those who said it was not in their mission, 68% are public libraries.

The usual process for developing a collections preservation plan is to complete a survey of collections (usually carried out by a professional), to assess needs and priorities, and then to write the summary document. Nearly half of Vermont organizations, 49%, have not carried out a survey of the general collections, compared to 35% of the national HHI survey. Few organizations have up-to-date collection preservation plans in Vermont (only 8%), but respondents to the HHI survey showed they are doing slightly more preservation planning (9%).

Most disturbing was the finding about emergency preparedness. The HHI survey found that a disconcerting 50% of its respondents do not have an up-to-date plan. Unfortunately, as the following chart shows, Vermont is even less prepared for emergencies, with 67% of institutions responding that they have no plan. Vermont collections are vulnerable; as many organizations are not exactly sure

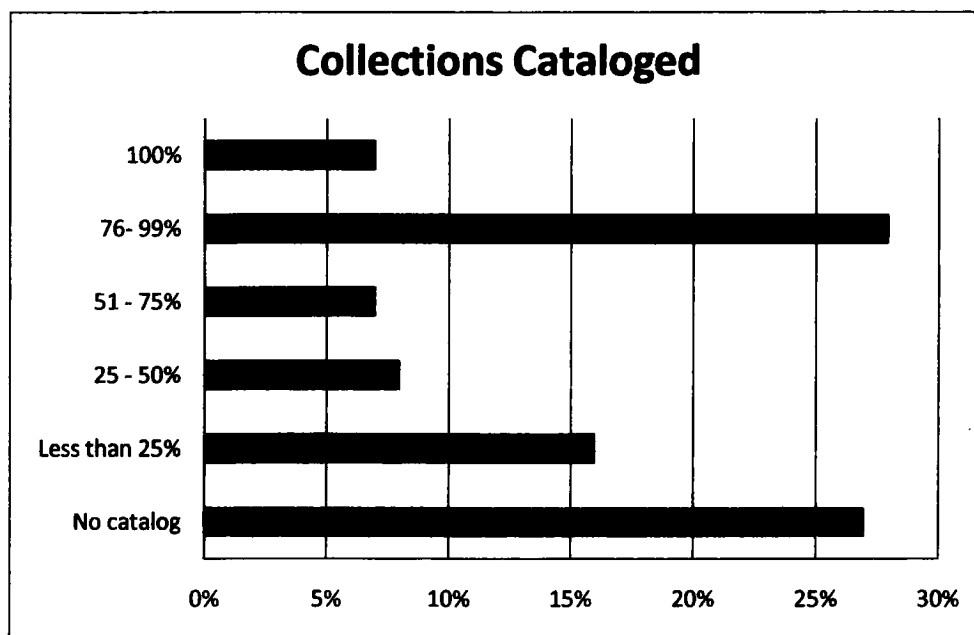
what they possess or what condition their collections are in. In the event of an emergency, precious time, resources, and valuable collections may be lost as staff scramble haphazardly to preserve and save what they can, instead of following a plan that strives to ensure the best care for collections.



Collections Catalog

Collections catalogs are the method by which institutions keep track of what they own. Information in these records can include description, size, location, donor, provenance, and location. A library's catalog usually includes title, brief description, size, and location. A museum or historical society's catalog record can include all of the above as well as detailed information on an object's history, local context and association, and research and exhibition information. At municipal offices and courts, indexes and catalogs make it possible for users to find information about land transactions and estate information. Catalogs make it possible to access information, maintain intellectual control, and at a minimum locate individual collection

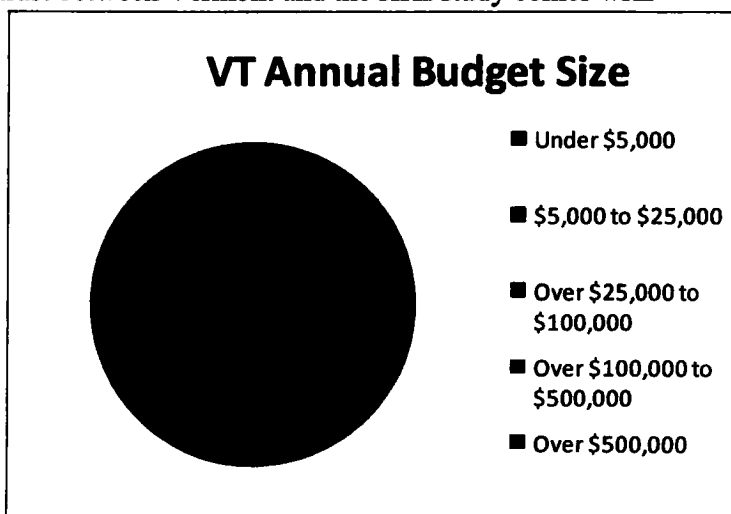
items. Without a written catalog, long-term physical and intellectual accessibility to collections by the public is not possible. What is lost, particularly in museums and historical societies are the individual stories associated with unique objects. In Vermont and in the HHI study, a minority of organizations have cataloged more than 75% of their collections, and few claim 100% completion. The percentages of Vermont's cataloging record can be seen below. The most disturbing information is that over 25% of institutions do not have any catalog and an additional 5% said they do not know if they have a catalog.



It is clear from these findings that there is a significant percentage of organizations that do not have intellectual control of their collections and are unsure of needs and best practices.

Budgets and Funding Sources

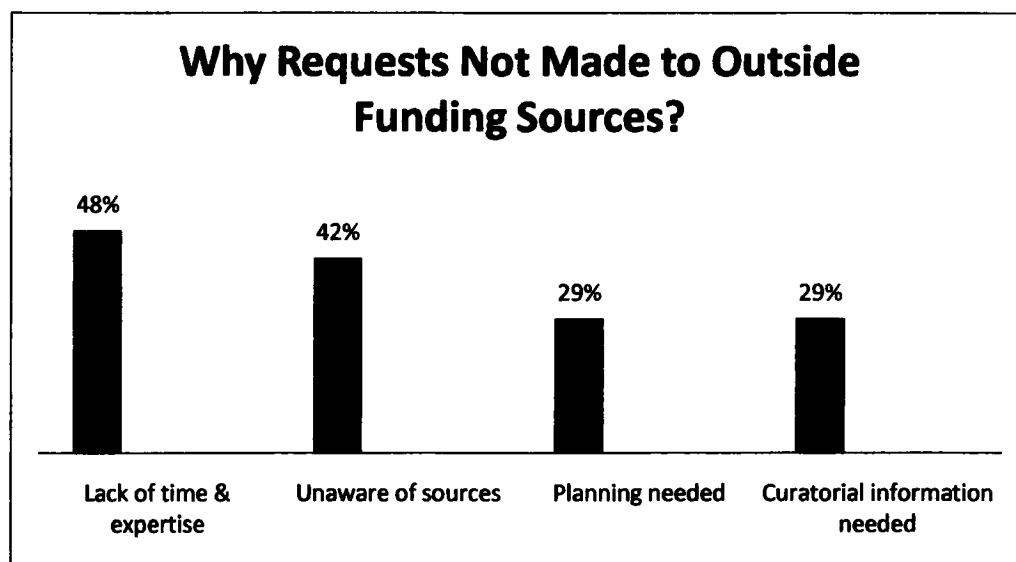
Not surprisingly, the greatest contrast between Vermont and the HHI study comes with comparisons of budgets. While 68% of Vermont organizations have yearly budgets under \$100,000, HHI had only 44%. Additionally, the national sample is over four times more likely to have budgets over \$500,000 a year (27%



nationally), versus only 6% in the Vermont sample. The breakdown of Vermont annual operating budgets is shown below.

Unfortunately, a weakness in the Vermont survey was not giving an option for even smaller figures for budgets, such as \$1,000 or even \$500 per year. As one recipient responded, "Our budget is WAY less than \$5,000. It's more like \$100." With 50% of Vermont's collecting institutions operating with less than \$25,000 a year, it is not surprising that collections care suffers, especially since 70% of these institutions own buildings and have to pay for skyrocketing energy and building maintenance costs.

When asked if funds were sought specifically for preservation projects, only 29% of respondents had done so. Of those that have sought preservation money, most have relied on individual donors (44%) or foundations (40%). Of the 21 organizations that did seek statewide funding, 43% requested funding from the Preservation Trust of Vermont, 34% from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, and 14% from the Vermont Cultural Facilities program. It is clear that when money for preservation is requested, it is usually for capital improvements to historic buildings, which is what these three funders underwrite. The 20 organizations that have applied for federal funding usually applied to IMLS (48%) or the National Endowment for the Humanities (48%). The reasons why most institutions did not seek funding are shown below.

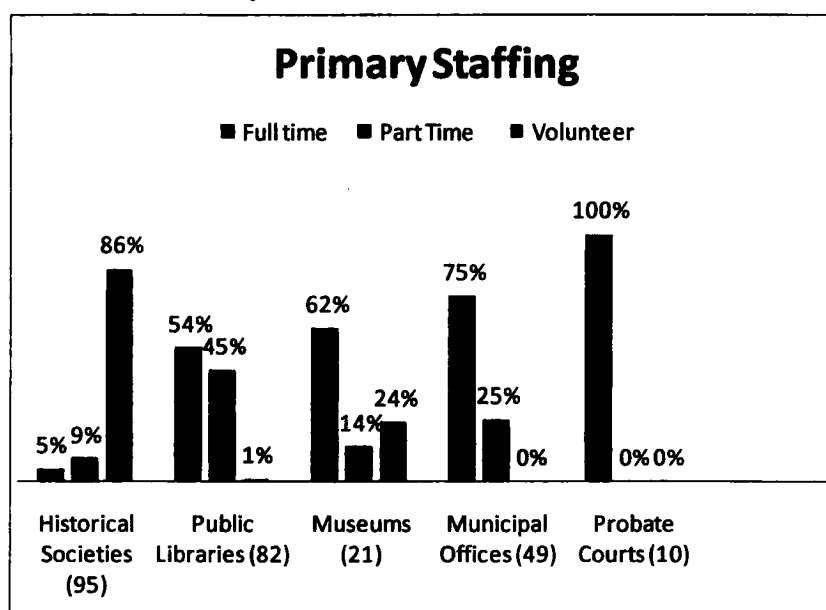


Most small institutions do not have the time or knowledge to go beyond their own communities for financial help. As funders continue to increase their requirements, request more information on their applications, and only provide for online filing, Vermont's many volunteer or part-time staffed institutions find the process frustrating, overwhelming, and exclusionary.

A little money can make a big difference to collections care no matter the budget size of an institution. In Vermont, even organizations with substantial budgets are still struggling to adequately care for their collections.

Staffing

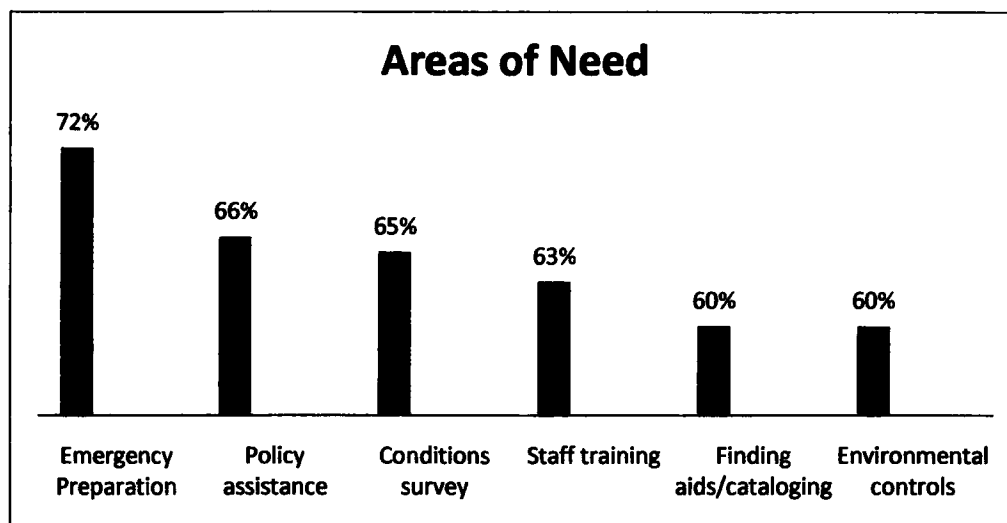
Since a majority of Vermont collecting institutions have annual budgets of less than \$25,000, it is not surprising that they do not have staff solely dedicated to collections care. The chart below shows the primary staffing of the institutional groups. The number in parentheses indicates the number that responded to the questions about staffing. The 49 municipal clerks represent 19% of the 248 municipal offices in the state, but all of Vermont's municipal offices have paid full-or-part-time help. For 86% of historical societies that responded, their day-to-day business is run by volunteers, while all of the probate courts have full-time paid staff. Even for those with paid staff (with the exception of the courts), all these organizations also indicated that they depended heavily on volunteers to complete their work.



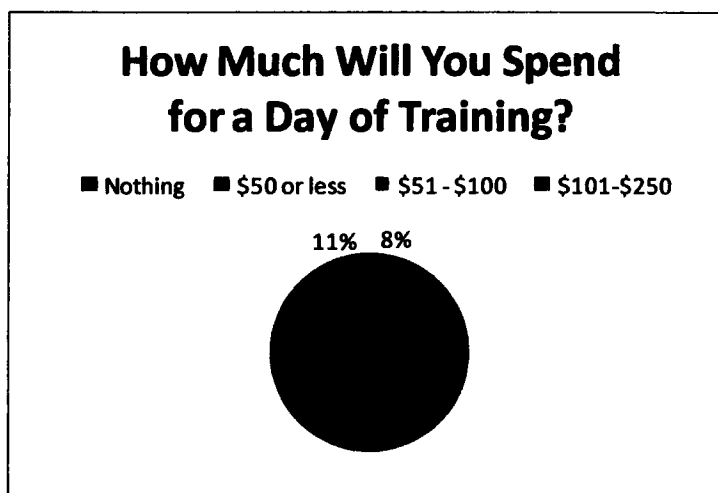
In terms of paid staff, nearly two-thirds of organizations, or 63%, have no one dedicated to collections at all, not even for one hour per week. Nearly one-third, 31%, have up to one full-time equivalent, and 6% have two or more. In contrast, only half of the national HHI respondents had no paid staff dedicated to collections.

Institutional Needs

The following chart shows what areas Vermont institutions have determined are a need for taking care of their collections.



Most Vermont institutions have a good sense of what they need in order to take care of their collections, but lack the staff, money, and expertise to do so. When asked their preferred type of instruction, 49% indicated that they prefer workshops. As the chart shows, however, they are not willing or able to spend much money for a full day of training. None of the respondents were willing to spend over \$250. Finding the most popular and affordable type of educational assistance for institutions will be key to collections care in Vermont.



Preliminary Recommendations

No one takes comfort in the fact that Vermont's findings mirror or only slightly lag behind those of the national HHI survey. The disturbing results about the care of Vermont's cultural heritage, in particular the lack of emergency planning, environmental controls, and low percentages of collections cataloged, need action. The VT CtoC Advisory Committee strongly endorses the actions set forth in the HHI report and hope this report will make Vermont citizens aware of the needs of its collecting institutions.

There are successful models that have worked in Vermont. Survey respondents indicated that the work of the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance (VMGA) played an important role in

education and improvement in collections care. Findings show that there is a strong correlation between membership in VMGA and higher levels of collections preservation. VMGA's collections care workshops drew participants not only from their membership – museums, galleries, and historical societies – but also from libraries and municipal clerks. Many of the collections surveys at Vermont's smaller institutions were conducted by VMGA. Unfortunately, VMGA can no longer afford to pay for a staff person to manage and implement its programs and it is currently being run by its volunteer board.

The programs funded by National Historic Publications and Records Commission and administered by the Vermont Historical Records Advisory Board (VHRAB), resulted in many collections surveys and cataloged collections at Vermont libraries and archives. Though VHRAB has been moribund for a few years, it is about to be reactivated in order to take advantage of possible re-grant funding from the National Archives. The Vermont Municipal Clerks and Treasurer's Association (VMCTA) has been effective in providing training for municipal clerks. The preservation fees charged by municipal offices do make a difference in collections preservation, if the fees are implemented. The state funded Vermont Cultural Facilities grants, administered by the Vermont Arts Council (VAC) with a coalition of the VAC, VHS, VMGA, and VDHP, are invaluable in providing capital building assistance to many of Vermont's public institutions. Historic preservation funding and ongoing assistance from the field services staff of the Preservation Trust of Vermont have helped save many of Vermont's important historic structures. The Vermont Division for Historic Preservations continues to provide advice on building preservation and small grants, but like all state agencies its budget is being cut.

Staffing size in Vermont's collecting institutions is not going to change, especially in these tough economic times. Small volunteer not-for-profits cannot sustain ongoing annual fundraising efforts to pay for staff and for many it is not a priority. Vermont's largest institutions are struggling to even maintain the status quo as they are hit by high energy and health care costs as well as the loss of funding from both private and public sources.

So what are the initial recommendations from the VT CtoC Advisory Committee? The first priority is emergency preparedness because a staggering 67% of institutions do not have an emergency plan, and respondents see the necessity of working on this area since they indicated it as their highest need (72%). In order to help institutions create emergency plans, Vermont needs to build on existing resources and partnerships by trying to do the following:

- Apply for IMLS's Connecting to Collections implementation grant. The VT CtoC Advisory Committee will develop a plan to provide training and assistance for collecting institutions to write their own emergency plans.
- Work through existing networks maintained by VHS, VMGA, VT DoL, and VT State Archives to promote the importance of emergency planning, making

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the Institute of Museum and Library Services for funding this project and Kristen Overbeck Laise, Heritage Preservation, for helpful suggestions and for allowing VHS to use many of the same questions as in the HHI survey. This project would not have been possible without the work of summer interns Laura Brill and Emily Voss, survey analysis by Susie Wilkening, and the recommendations of the Vermont Connecting to Collections Advisory Committee. Most of all our deep appreciation goes to the 292 institutions that answered the survey (listed below).

Jacqueline Calder, Project Director

The Vermont Connecting to Collections Advisory Committee

Jacqueline Calder – Curator, Vermont Historical Society
 Paul Carnahan – Librarian, Vermont Historical Society
 Eileen Corcoran – Director, Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance
 Mary Jo Davis – Paper conservator in private practice
 Paul Donavan – Reference Librarian, Vermont State Library
 John Dumville – Chief of Historic Sites, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation
 Kevin Graffagnino – former Director, Vermont Historical Society
 Mark Hudson – Director, Vermont Historical Society
 Richard Kerschner – Chief Conservator, Shelburne Museum
 Ann Lawless – Director, American Precision Museum
 Jeffery Marshall – Head of Special Collections, University of Vermont
 Sybil Brigham McShane- retired Vermont State Librarian
 Martha Reid – Vermont State Librarian
 Gregory Sanford – Vermont State Archivist

available examples of model emergency plans, and provide updated information in one central online location. The VT CtoC survey indicates that most institutions have access to the internet, and as Vermont's online infrastructure improves, this communications network will be key.

- Provide annual re-training opportunities for Vermont's Emergency Disaster Team, a group of professionals from museums, historical societies, archives and municipal offices who have received instruction in how to help institutions preserve and recover collections after an emergency.
- The Vermont Historical Society has received a \$7,500 grant from Heritage Preservation to join their Alliance for Response project. A statewide committee of professionals, including state emergency managers, collecting institutions, and other interested parties, will plan and implement an informational workshop on August 30, 2009, to facilitate interactions between these groups and emergency first responders. The committee will build on this program to maintain these lines of communications.
- Look into the possibility of creating regional storage spaces for emergency supplies that would be available in case of a disaster to any collecting institutions.
- Annually promoted National Emergency Preparedness Day, May 1, a day for all institutions to update their emergency plans and provide annual staff training.
- Through existing networks, take count of which organizations have written an emergency plans and evaluate the effectiveness of these various efforts and disseminate best practices and models.

During this initial project, all partners need to begin planning for the future phases of preservation efforts to help institutions with their next greatest needs of creating adequate environmental conditions and cataloging. Vermont institutions with networks and missions that serve statewide collecting institutions, such as VHS, VMGA, VDHP, VDoL, and the VSA, need to be involved in plans for funding from potential re-grant programs planned by the National Archives and IMLS. Any successful methods and models developed during the emergency planning project need to be built on for the next phases. The public needs to be kept informed about any preservation projects in their communities so that they understand the need for ongoing support for the care of Vermont's important heritage collections. The many Vermont communities that have an historical society, municipal office, and library in their midst need to understand the true costs of maintaining these collections held in the public trust.

Guildhall Public Library
 Guilford Historical Society
 Halifax Historical Society
 Hartford Historical Society
 Hartford Probate Court
 Hartland Historical Society
 Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home
 Historical Society of Peru
 Historical Society of Windham
 County
 Holland Historical Society

 Hubbardton Battlefield State Historic
 Site
 Hubbardton Historical Society
 ILM Historical Society
 Jamaica Historical Foundation
 Jeudevine Memorial Library
 John Woodruff Simpson Memorial
 library
 Johnson Historical Society
 Johnson Public Library
 Jones Memorial Library
 Jones Memorial Library
 Joslin Memorial Library
 Julien and Virginia Cornell Library
 Justin Morrill State Historic Site
 Kellogg-Hubbard Library
 Kimball Public Library
 Kreitzberg Library - Norwich
 University
 Landgrove Historical Society
 Lanpher Memorial Library
 Lawrence Memorial library
 Lincoln Library
 Lowell Historical Society
 Lunenburg Historical Society
 main street museum
 Manchester Historical Society
 Mark Skinner Library
 Marlboro Historical Society
 Marshfield Historical Society
 Mendon Historical Society
 Middlebury College
 Middlesex Historical Society

Middletown Springs History Society
 Middletown Springs Public Library
 Monkton Museum and Historical
 Society
 Montgomery Historical Society
 Moore Free Library
 Morrill Memorial and Harris Library
 Morristown Centennial Library
 Mount Independence State Historic
 Site
 Ndakinna Cultural Center and
 Museum, Inc.
 Newbury Historical Society
 Norman Williams Public Library
 North Hero Historical Society
 North Hero Public Library
 Northfield Historical Society
 Norwich Historical Society
 Norwich Public Library
 Noyes House Museum
 Old Constitution House State
 Historic Site
 Orange County Courthouse
 Orleans County Historical Society
 Pawlet Public Library
 Peacham Historical Association
 Peacham Library
 Pioneer Memorial Society
 Pittsfield Historical Society
 Plainfield Historical Society
 Pope Memorial Library
 Porter Music Museum
 Poultney Historical society
 Poultney Public Library
 Pownal Historical Society
 President Calvin Coolidge State
 Historic Site
 President Chester Arthur State
 Historic Site
 Proctor Historical Society
 Proctor Library
 Putney Historical Society
 Richford Historical Society
 Richmond Historical Society
 Robert Frost Stone House Museum

Institutions that Responded to the Vermont Connecting to Collections Survey

Alburgh Historical Society, Inc.	Charleston Historical Society
Aldrich Public Library	Chelsea Historical Society
American Precision Museum	Chimney Point State Historic Site
Arvin A. Brown Public Library	Chittenden Historical Society
Bailey/Howe Library	Chittenden Public Library
Baldwin Memorial Library	City of Burlington-Clerk/Treasurer
Barnet Public Library	Office-City Hal
Barre Historical Society	Cobleigh Public Library
Baxter Memorial Library	Colchester Historical Society
Bennington Battle Monument	Corinth Historical Society
Bennington College	Cornish Colony Museum
Bennington Free Library	Cornwall Free Public Library
Bennington Museum	Danville Historical Society, Inc.
Bennington Museum Library	DAR John Strong Mansion Museum
Bent Northrop Memorial Library	Dorset Historical Society
Berkshire Historical Society	Dover Historical Society
Berlin Historical Society	Duxbury Historical Society, Inc.
Bethel Historical Society	East Montpelier Historical Society
Billings Farm & Museum	Eliot D, Pratt Library
Black River Academy & Historical	Essex Community Historical Society
Society	Essex County Courthouse
Bradford Public Library	Estey Organ Museum
Bradley Law Office State Historic	Eureka Schoolhouse
Site	Fair Haven Probate Court
Braintree Historical Society	Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium
Brattleboro Historical Society	Fairlee Public Library
Bridport Historical society	Farrar House - Weston Historical
Brooks Memorial Library	Society
Brownell Library	Fletcher Free Library
Burke Mtn. Club/East Burke	Fletcher Memorial Library
Community Library	Gilbert Hart Library
Burlington College Library	Glover Historical Society
Burnham Memorial Library	Goodrich Memorial Library
Cabot Historical Society Inc.	Goshen Town Office
Caledonia Probate Court	Grand Isle Free Library
Calvin Coolidge Memorial	Grass Roots Art & Community Effort
Foundation	Green Mountain Perkins Academy
Cambridge Historical Society	and Historical Soc.
Carpenter-Carse Library	Greensboro Historical Society
Castleton Women's Club	Groton Free Public Library

Town of Wheelock
Town of Whiting
Town of Wilmington
Townshend Historical Society
Underwater Historic Preserves
USS Montpelier Museum
UVM Physics Department
Vermont CCC Alumni Association
Chapter 112
Vermont Folklife Center
Vermont Historical Society
Vermont Ski Museum
Vernon Free Library
Vershire Historical Society
Waitsfield Historical Society
Walden Historical Committee
Wardsboro Public Library
Warren Public Library
Washington Historical Society
Waterbury Historical Society

Weathersfield Historical Society
Wells Village Library
West Haven Historical Society
West Rutland Historical Society, Inc
Westminster District Probate Court
Westminster West Public Library
Westminster Historical Society
Weston Mill Museum/Weston
Historical Society
Whitingham Free Public Library
Whiting Library
Wilmington Historical Society
Windsor Dist. Probate Court
Windsor Public Library
Winooski Memorial Library
Woodbury Community Library
Woodstock Historical Society

and eighteen other organizations that
wish to remain anonymous

Robert Hull Fleming Museum, Univ.
 of Vermont
 Rochester Historical Society
 Rochester Public Library
 Rokeby Museum
 Roxbury Free Library
 Roxbury Historical Society
 Royalton Memorial Library
 Russell Memorial Library
 Russell Vermontiana Collection
 Rutland City Clerk
 Rutland City Department of Public
 Works
 Rutland City Treasurer
 Rutland Free Library
 Rutland Historical Society
 Rutland Probate Court
 Ryegate Historical Society
 Saint Michael's College Archives
 Sheffield Historical Society
 Shelburne Farms
 Shelburne Museum
 Sherburne Historians
 Shrewsbury Historical Society, Inc.
 South Hero Bicentennial Museum
 South Hero Community Library
 south Londonderry free library
 South Ryegate Public Library
 Springfield Town Library
 Springfield Town Library
 St. Albans Free Library
 St. Johnsbury Academy
 St. Johnsbury Athenaeum
 Stamford Community Library
 Stamford Historical Society
 Sterling College Library
 Stockbridge/Gaysville Historical
 Society
 Stowe Historical Society
 Stowe Town Clerk
 Strafford Historical Society
 Sullivan Museum & History Center
 Swanton Public Library
 The Nature Museum at Grafton
 The Old Stone House Museum

The Vermont Music Library & Shop
 Theron Boyd State Historic Site
 Thetford Historical Society
 Tinmouth Historical and
 Genealogical Society
 Topsham Historical Society
 Town Clerk Arlington
 Town of Barre
 Town of Barton
 Town of Belvidere
 Town of Braintree
 Town of Brandon
 Town of Cabot
 Town of Calais
 Town of Corinth
 Town of Corinth
 Town of Craftsbury
 Town of Essex - Town Clerk's Office
 Town of Granville
 Town of Greensboro
 Town of Jericho
 Town of Lincoln
 Town of Maidstone
 Town of Marlboro
 Town of Middlebury
 Town of Milton
 Town of Moretown
 Town of Morristown
 Town of New Haven
 Town of Newbury
 Town of Reading
 Town of Richford
 Town of Roxbury
 Town of Shoreham
 Town of Shrewsbury
 Town of St. George
 Town of St. Johnsbury
 Town of Starksboro
 Town of Stratton, Vermont
 Town of Sudbury/Sudbury Historical
 Society
 Town of Victory
 Town of Waltham
 Town of Waterford
 Town of Westfield

Vermont
Connecting to Collections
Project

Survey Report and Analysis

by

Susie Wilkening

March 2009

Table of Contents

Overview	3
Methodology	4
Topline Results	7
Analysis by Organization Type	21
Analysis by Budget Type	30
Analysis by Paid Staffing Levels	34
Conclusions and Recommendations	38
Acknowledgements	41
List of survey participants	42

Overview

In 2008 the Vermont Historical Society (VHS) received a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Service's (IMLS) Connecting to Collections initiative. The money funded the Vermont Connecting to Collection Project (VT CtoC) a statewide assessment of the current conditions of Vermont's cultural heritage collections. VHS working in partnership with the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance (VMGA), the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP), the Vermont Department of Libraries (DoL), and the Vermont State Archives (VSA) formed an advisory committee and developed a survey and a database of potential participants.

This data was collected for three purposes:

1. Determine the current status of collections for future benchmarking.
2. Compare the status in Vermont to the nationwide Heritage Health Index study¹ (when comps are available).
3. Determine the areas of greatest need for future planning, funding, and advocacy.

Like the Heritage Health Index (HHI), the Vermont Connecting to Collections study found that Vermont's collections are at risk and require immediate attention. Additionally, while all types of collecting organizations have some degree of need, certain types of collecting organizations, namely very small historical societies, have collections that are in the most danger of deterioration, loss, and for some, neglect.

This report aims to examine the data and provide the following:

1. Topline results, comparing VT CtoC results with that of HHI, in the following areas:
 - Function
 - Conditions
 - Planning
 - Staff and training
 - Funding
2. Additional analysis by:
 - Organization type
 - Budget size
 - Staffing
3. Recommendations

¹ The Heritage Health Index study (also funded by IMLS) was the first major national survey to address the conservation and preservation of collections across the country. The full report was released in December 2005, and can be found by going to <http://www.heritagepreservation.org/HHI/full.html>.

Methodology

The goal of VT CtoC was to assess the condition of public collections of historic and artistic material in Vermont, including materials held by municipal offices and probate courts. In the spring of 2008 a survey was drafted, with approximately half of the questions based on the recent national survey completed by the Heritage Health Index (see below for more information), providing valuable comparisons with national norms. The remaining questions were Vermont specific or covered areas that HHI did not specifically address.²

The survey was loaded into an online survey program, *Zoomerang*, and tested in preparation for a summer launch. Two graduate interns began work in May. They compiled and refined the contact databases, tested the online survey, and transferred the online version of the survey to a paper-based version. During the course of the summer the interns planned and implemented six regional meetings that provided the opportunity to discuss the goals of the project, answer questions and encourage survey participation, as well as emailing, calling and visiting institutions to remind them to fill out the surveys. The interns also transferred survey information into *Zoomerang* from institutions that submitted paper copies, and answered questions via email and telephone. (The libraries were contacted via email by the Department of Libraries and not by the interns).

The survey was launch in mid July 2008 and completed by September 1, 2008. In total 776 organizations were contacted including: 300 historical societies, historic sites, galleries and museums; 246 town clerks; 186 public libraries, 24 academic libraries; and 18 probate courts. Contacts at each of the organizations were referred to the online survey link and a link to the VHS website that enabled them to download a paper version of the survey. The libraries were directed to a link to the survey on the DOL website. If no email address was available, or a hard copy was requested, a paper copy of the survey was mailed to the institution along with a stamped envelope addressed to VHS. Many institutions chose to download and print the survey themselves. It was not possible to save your progress on Zoomerang so it had to be completed in one sitting, the survey would time out if the computer was old or the internet connection was slow, and often institutions felt that more than one person was needed in order to determine the appropriate answers for the survey questions. It was therefore very important to have multiple options for how to take the survey.

In the end, 292 organizations completed the survey, a response rate of approximately 38% [REDACTED]. These organizations were of the following types:

² For example, the HHI study did not include public records, while the Vermont study did.

Historical society	28%
Public library	27%
Public records – municipal	17%
Historic house/site	7%
Academic library	4%
Archives	3%
Public records – court	3%
Natural history museum	1%
Agency or university department with scientific, archaeological, or artifact collections	1%
Science/technology museum	<1%
Other ³	9%

Questions were mostly multiple choices, though a written-in “other” category was provided when appropriate and every question had a “don’t know” choice. Three open-ended response questions were provided to find out about pressing collections needs, most important collections, and for final thoughts or comments on the survey.

Analysis began upon closure of the survey, and included direct comparisons of the topline results and the HHI results, as well as cross-tab analysis that allowed comparison of organizations by type, budget size, and staff.

The Heritage Health Index

The Heritage Health Index study was the first major national survey to address the conservation and preservation of collections across the country. The full report was released in December 2005, and can be found by going to <http://www.heritagepreservation.org/HHI/full.html>. Because this study forms a comprehensive national picture of the state of collections, it is being used as a useful comparison for the Vermont study. The Heritage Health Index research found that collections in America’s museums and libraries are at threat, and they recommended that institutions ensure safe conditions for collections, development of emergency plans at all collecting institutions, the assignment of responsibility for the collection to staff members, and a call for financial support for collections care.

In our comparisons between Vermont and the national sample, some things should be kept in mind. First, comparisons only take place when the same question is asked in both surveys. If there is any difference in the question, it is specifically noted in this report. Second, the samples are different in that the Vermont study included municipal and court records, while the national sample did not. Readers should keep that difference in mind when examining data as it does make the results less directly comparable. Yet we felt that including municipal and court records was important, and this inclusion does not render comparisons without merit.⁴ Finally, Vermont has an unusually high number of collecting organizations when compared to other

³ “Other” respondents were largely historical societies, public libraries, and public records, as well as a few other types of collecting institutions, such as a “Cabinet of Wonder.”

⁴ When municipal records are removed from the study in order to directly compare like samples, the results generally indicate that Vermont is further behind the national sample. That is, municipal records generally indicate that they go to more effort to adequately care for their collections, raising the Vermont averages. Overall, however, the effect of municipal records on the overall sample is less than five percentage points.

states, and many of these collecting organizations are very small, all-volunteer organizations. This does affect the results, as explained throughout the report.

Topline Result

Function

There are a variety of collecting organizations in Vermont. Ranging from historical societies to collections kept in labs in universities, Vermont's tangible culture is maintained by organizations large and small, and very diverse.

These organizations do fit within broader categories. Of the 292 responding organizations, 28% are historical societies, 27% public libraries, and 17% municipal records. No other organization type comprised more than 10% of respondents. Compared to the national HHI sample, Vermont had more than two times as many historical societies responding (only 11% of HHI respondents were historical societies).⁵

Organizations often had more than one function; overall, each responding organization averaged 2.5 functions. These secondary functions included archives (45%), historical society (24%), and historic house/site (21%). A fifth of all respondents said they had no secondary function. Although HHI recorded similar secondary response rates for archives and historic sites, fewer HHI respondents indicated historical societies (only 11%), and more indicated no secondary function (33%).

The majority of Vermont respondents, 52%, are nonprofit organizations. A third, 35%, are municipal/county agencies, and 6% each are state or academic organizations. In contrast, only 42% of the national sample was nonprofits, while 17% were academic.

Almost all Vermont collecting organizations have book collections, as well as archival collections. Collections types, in Vermont and in the national sample, were as follows:

	Vermont	HHI
Books	89%	58%
Unbound sheets	80%	52%
Photographic	66%	48%
Recorded sound	57%	54%
Historic objects	53%	55%
Art	51%	62%
Moving images	46%	61%
Digital materials	41%	31%
Historic buildings	33%	n/a
Archaeological	14%	33%
Natural science	9%	50%

⁵ A common theme running throughout this report is that Vermont lags slightly behind the national average from the HHI study. Primarily this is due to the larger proportion of very small organizations responding to the survey in Vermont, but there is more to it than that. Indeed, Vermont has the highest density of museums of any state in the country. With 46.5 museums/100,000 population, Vermont has nearly *eight times* the number of museums per capita than nation as a whole, which has only 5.9 museums/100,000. Unsurprisingly, the density in Vermont is due to its primarily rural, small-town nature, with most towns having at least one, albeit small, museum/historical society. Per capita museum data from pp. 20 – 21, *IMLS Exhibiting Public Value: Government Funding for Museums in the United States*, available at <http://www.imls.gov/pdf/MuseumPublicFinance.pdf>.

Here Vermont differed a bit from the national sample. Vermont collecting organizations were significantly more likely to have books, unbound materials, and photographic records, and significantly less likely to have archaeological and natural science collections. (HHI did not ask about historic buildings.) In part, this is due to the inclusion of municipal records in the VT CtoC project and to the higher number of public libraries responding to the VT CtoC than the HHI study.

Overall, compared to the national sample, Vermont has a significantly larger proportion of historical societies (both as primary and secondary function), and overall Vermont organizations are performing more functions than the national sample. Correlating with this is the significantly larger percentage of nonprofits responding in Vermont compared to the national sample. Additionally, the abundance of historical societies in Vermont also affected the response to the types of collections held.

Current Conditions

To measure current conditions of collections, respondents were asked to share information on storage conditions, security, environmental controls, current collections needs, loss and damage that has happened to the collection in the past, and the extent to which the collection has been catalogued (and how that catalogue is stored and maintained).

Storage Space and Conditions

The majority of collecting organizations in Vermont have organizationally owned storage facilities, 70%. Just over a quarter, 28%, also utilize donated or shared space, 12% rent space, and 5% use private homes for storage (respondents could choose all applicable categories). Thirty-six percent of respondents indicated they had enough storage space, while 26% need at least 50% more, and another 26% need at least 100% more storage space. Twelve percent said they did not know how much more, if any, was necessary.

When asked what percentage of collections the respondent deemed was in an "adequate" environment, only 13% of respondents said all of their collections were adequately stored. An additional 35% estimated that over half were adequately stored, and 26% said less than half. Fourteen percent said none of their collections were adequately stored, and 11% responded that they did not know.

Current security and environmental controls are as follows in Vermont:

	All areas	Some areas	No areas	Don't know
Security system	32%	16%	50%	2%
Temperature controls	25%	32%	37%	1%
Humidity controls	17%	33%	44%	2%
Light controls	30%	32%	32%	3%
Environmental monitoring equipment	26%	18%	50%	5%

For those organizations that *do* use monitoring equipment, 65% used a thermometer, 33% a hygrometer, and 22% use insect traps. All other forms of monitoring equipment were utilized by less than 10% of those organizations that do use some sort of equipment (therefore, percentages do *not* include those organizations that use *no* equipment whatsoever or 55% of respondents).

When further analysis was done, 19% of respondents did not have temperature, humidity, or light controls in any storage space. Of these respondents, 44% were public libraries and 24% were historical societies. Additionally, these organizations generally had no collections planning documents (page 16), and 52% of them had operating budgets of under \$25,000/year (a stunning 40% of respondents had budgets of under \$5,000/year, 12% between \$5,000 and \$25,000).

This reflects a disturbing amount of threat to Vermont collections, with a significant proportion of collections not stored in secure, environmentally safe conditions – especially at the smallest of collecting organizations. Overall, however, these results generally mirror that of the national sample.

Needs Assessment

Needs assessment also took place in the survey. Respondents indicated the following levels of need:

	No need	Need	Urgent need	Don't know
Finding aids/cataloging	27%	45%	15%	11%
Conditions survey	20%	53%	11%	13%
Staff training	16%	57%	6%	12%
Security	40%	34%	6%	15%
Environmental controls	21%	47%	13%	16%
Light controls	37%	35%	6%	19%
Conservation treatment	17%	48%	5%	25%
Preservation of digital collections	28%	33%	3%	16%
Pest management	36%	29%	4%	25%
Emergency preparation	12%	59%	13%	14%
Policy assistance	20%	55%	11%	12%

Again, Vermont collections are clearly under threat, with a tremendous amount of need for additional efforts to secure the future of Vermont's tangible legacy. And again, the perceived needs in Vermont generally mirror those of the national HHI sample.

There are some inconsistencies here in the results, however, that should not be ignored. First, while only 32% of respondents said there was a security system in all areas of collection storage, 40% said there was no need for additional security – a gap of eight percentage points. Additionally, 50% reported there was no security system in place at all, but only 6% said there was an urgent need for greater security. Again, a large gap between reality and perceived needs.

Similarly, while only 30% of respondents said there were light controls in all areas, 37% of respondents said there was no need of additional light controls. And while 44% said there were no light controls whatsoever, only 6% responded that there was an urgent need for light controls.

Admittedly, not all collections absolutely need to have security systems or light controls, yet the large gaps between reality and perceived need should not be ignored. Also not to be ignored are the significant numbers of respondents who responded “don’t know,” indicating that those who have custody of collections may not be aware of best practices of collections care or know the current status of collections. Further analysis does indicate that those who did respond “don’t know” correlated *somewhat* with those organizations that have no collections staff (defined as anyone with responsibility for collections, paid or unpaid) and no environmental controls.

Damage and Loss to Collections

Respondents were also asked to estimate loss and damage to collections, as follows:

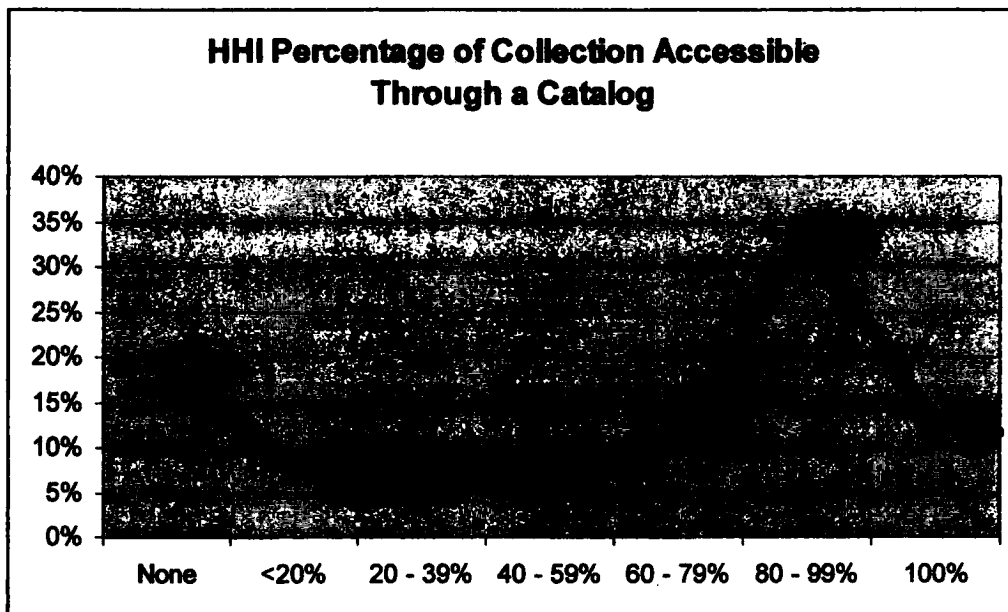
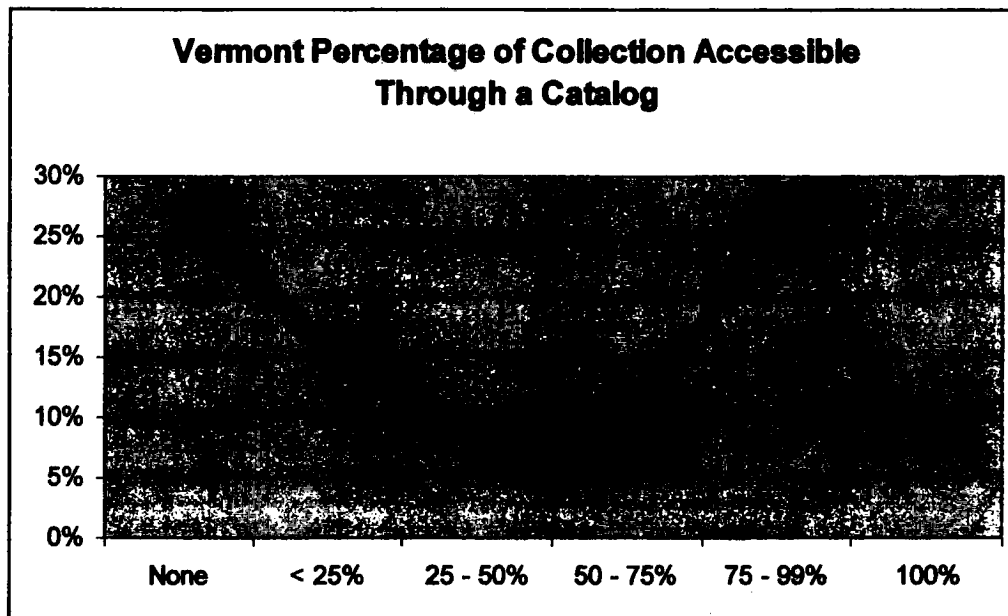
	No loss	Some loss	Significant loss	Don't know
Handling	41%	44%	3%	13%
Water	41%	43%	6%	11%
Light	27%	52%	3%	17%
Airborne particulates	42%	29%	2%	27%
Fire	88%	5%	0%	7%
Improper storage	31%	51%	5%	13%
Pests	58%	19%	3%	19%
Vandalism	81%	8%	0%	11%
Deterioration	19%	60%	11%	10%
Obsolescence	50%	22%	2%	25%
Prior treatment	53%	17%	1%	28%
Theft	61%	18%	2%	18%

Vermont collections have clearly suffered loss due to the reasons listed above. And again, the levels of loss experienced in Vermont generally mirror those of the national HHI sample. Yet a significant proportion of respondents *don't know* if there has been loss to collections, for any reason, once again indicating that the tangible culture of Vermont is under threat as organizations are not completely sure of the conditions of their collections.

Collections Catalog

To fully understand needs and loss, an up-to-date catalog is crucial. In both Vermont and the national HHI study, a minority of organizations had more than 75% of their collections cataloged, and few claimed 100%.

Although the VT CtoC and HHI utilized different scales when asking what percentage of the collection was accessible through a catalog, line graphs of the results indicate similar curves, as seen below. This graph is kind of confusing because the x and y axis are not clearly defined

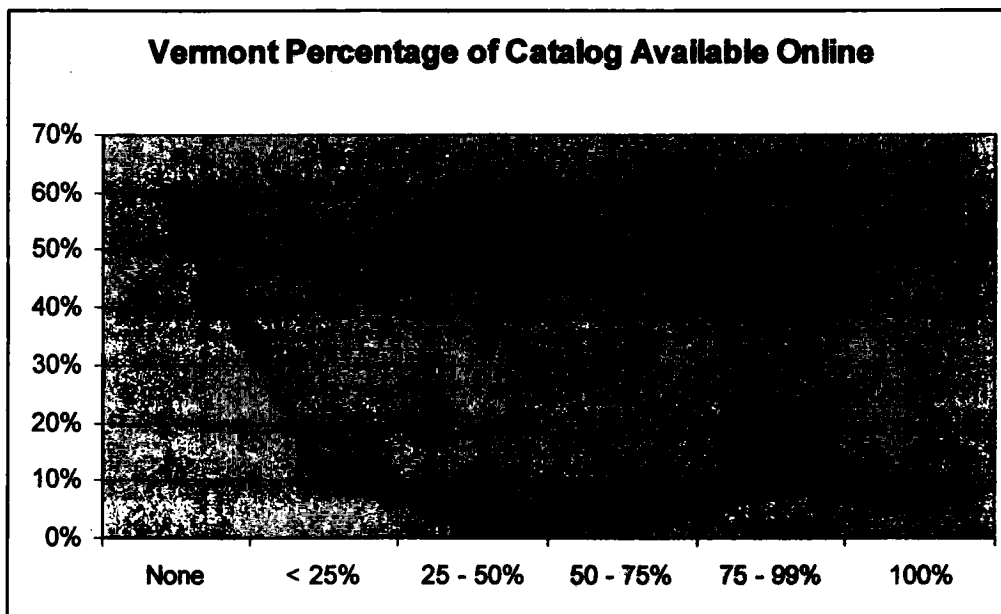


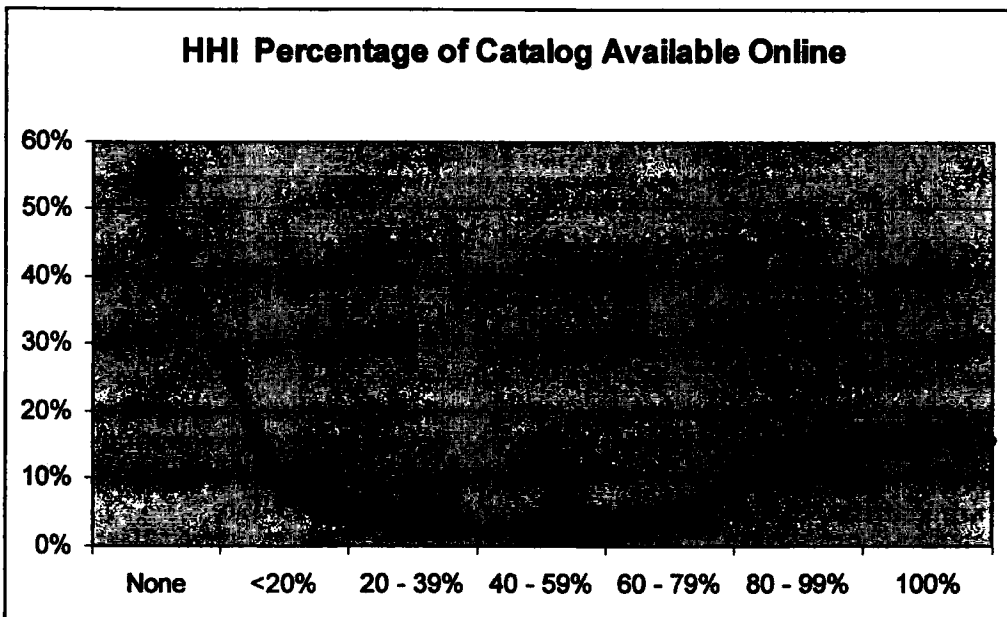
But while the curves are similar, a significant number of Vermont respondents, 27%, said there was no catalog whatsoever, and an additional 5% said they did not know, indicating a third of

Vermont collecting organizations do not have intellectual control over *any* of their collections versus fewer than a quarter reporting likewise in the national HHI study.

Of those organizations that do have a catalog, a majority of organizations maintain their catalog in a hard copy format, 68%, but a similar number 65%, use some kind of software (2/3 use professional collections software while 1/3 use off-the-shelf software, such as Microsoft Office programs).

About half of respondents to both the VT CtoC and HHI studies have not made any of their collections catalog available online (online use could be restricted to organizational use only or made available to the public). Once again, despite using different scales, when graphed both studies show similar curves, as seen below.





Online access to collections by the public was very low, with 74% having no public online access at all, while 8% do not now, but plan to by 2009. Only 15% of organizations with catalogs currently allow the public to access collections via online exhibitions, interactive resources, or digitally scanned documents or artifacts.

Vermont Current Collections Conditions Conclusions

When the conditions of Vermont collections are analyzed, it is clear that there is a significant percentage of collecting organizations that do not have intellectual control over their collections, and are unsure of needs and best practices. As will be seen in further sections of this report, these organizations tend to be very small organizations, primarily historical societies, that desperately need assistance, whether they realize it or not. Additionally, the large proportion of the study respondents that came from these small historical societies indicate that Vermont has a larger proportion of its collections in the hands of small organizations, and that collections care in Vermont may be lagging slightly behind that of the national sample because of these very small organizations.

Collections Planning

The VT CtoC survey asked a series of questions to determine how organizations prioritize collections care, if they currently have plans to properly care for collections in the future, and in the case of future disaster.

For some collecting organizations, like public libraries, the majority of their holdings are meant to be accessible and used by the public. For other organizations, lack of staff or awareness of collecting issues creates impediments to the proper care of collections.

Mission

Two-thirds of Vermont organizations, 65%, reported that their mission supports the preservation of their collections, while a quarter, 25%, said it did not. Ten percent of respondents responded that they did not know. Of those who reported that preservation was not in their mission, 68% were public libraries.

While most organizations do support collections preservation in their mission, far fewer support preservation of digital collections in their mission, only 28%. Nearly half, 45% said it did not, 14% did not know, and 13% said it was not applicable.

Surveys and Long-Range Planning

Nearly half of Vermont organizations, 49%, had not carried out a survey of the general collections, significantly higher than the 35% of national HHI respondents who had no survey. Only 22% of organizations said that their survey was complete and up-to-date.

Of those who had completed some sort of conditions survey, whether up-to-date or not, or complete or partial, nearly half, 47%, had completed the surveys in the last five years while another third, 36%, had completed it in the past five to ten years. Only 21% of those with some existing survey had commissioned the survey more than ten years ago.

Like in the national HHI study, few organizations had an up-to-date long-range preservation plan, only 8% of organizations in Vermont, and only 9% nationwide. An additional 8% said there was an out of date plan and another 8% reported that a plan was in development. Eighteen percent said the preservation was part of the organization's overall long-range plan, and not a separate document. But more than half of Vermont organizations, 53%, have no preservation plan and no intention to develop one in the near future. This proportion is similar to that in the national HHI study (50%).

Disaster Planning

The majority of Vermont collecting organizations, 67%, have no emergency or disaster plan, only 9% of organizations have a current disaster plan, and an additional 4% reported that their plan was complete, but out-of-date. Thirteen percent said a plan was in progress, and 7% replied that they did not know.

Vermont is behind, the national HHI study in terms of disaster planning. The HHI found 22% of organizations have an up-to-date disaster plan, while 50% do not. .

Of Vermont organizations *with* a plan, 13% overall, respondents were asked if their volunteer or paid staff were prepared to carry out the plan. Only two-thirds, 65%, said yes, while a third, 35%, said no or that they did not know.

Organizations that had no plan at all were asked why they had no plan. A quarter, 25%, said there was no time to write such a plan, and a similar number, 23%, said they were unaware of the need for a plan. A fifth, 20%, said it was simply not an organizational priority, while 16% indicated that no one at the organization had the expertise to write a plan. Additionally, some written-in comments suggested that since collections were stored in fire-proof vaults, an emergency plan was unnecessary. [REDACTED]

Just over half of Vermont organizations said they kept copies of at least some or all of their collections records off-site (23% all, 32% some). A third, 32%, said records were stored on-site,

8% had no records at all, and 5% did not know. Those organizations that stored copies of some or all of their collections records off-site primarily used hard copies, 62%, but 42% relied on CD-Rs, memory sticks, or hard drives, 18% relied on remote servers, and 15% still relied on microfilm backups.

Mission and Planning Conclusions

Overall, the majority of collecting organizations in Vermont set collections care as a priority by including it in their mission. Public libraries are the primary type of organization that does not include collections care as part of their mission.

Most Vermont collecting organizations do not have an up-to-date survey of their collections, long-range plans for collections care, or emergency plans in case of a disaster. The lack of collection documentation and planning place Vermont collections at risk from loss from catastrophe, theft, or simply benign neglect.

Staff and Training

Staffing Levels

Responding organizations were asked to indicate how much time paid and unpaid staff members dedicated to collections, as well as what preservation activities were undertaken.

Overwhelmingly, Vermont collecting organizations reported to be more understaffed than in the national HHI study.

Sixty three percent of organizations have no paid staff dedicated to collections. In contrast, only half of the national HHI respondents had no paid staff dedicated to collections. Nearly a third, 31%, have up to one full-time equivalent (meaning that up to 40 hours a week is spent on collections care by one or more paid staff members), and 6% have two or more.

There were similar results for volunteer staff, with 62% of Vermont organizations indicating there are no volunteers dedicated to collections care. The national HHI study reported that 56% had no collections care volunteers. About a third, 32%, said they had up to one full-time equivalent [REDACTED] dedicated to collections care, and 6% said they had two or more.

Even though most institutions spend little time on collections care, there are still some preservation activities taking place. Respondents were asked whether activities were performed, and if so, were they done by staff or an external provider.

	Staff	External provider	Not done but planned	Not done	Don't know
Preventative	59%	2%	4%	25%	7%

conservation					
Preservation management	47%	2%	6%	32%	10%
Conservation treatment	20%	23%	6%	38%	8%
Preservation reformatting	29%	16%	7%	35%	6%
Preservation of audio/visual	15%	3%	6%	48%	10%
Digital materials	23%	4%	9%	40%	10%

Staff Training

Both paid and volunteer staff sought out formal training in the past few years, and many indicated that they found it beneficial and hoped for more training in the future. When asked what kind of training or services they had participated in or obtained for their institution in the past five years, the response was as follows:

- 56% Workshops
- 35% Consulted peers
- 34% Conferences or meetings
- 21% Conservation treatment
- 18% Surveys or assessments
- 15% Consulted publications, including CDs
- 14% Mentoring or site visits
- 5% Online training
- 1% Television programming / DVDs

Twenty four percent of the respondents reported that they, or their institutions, had not participated in at least one of these activities in the past five years, and another 7% did not know.

Respondents were then asked what types of training programs they would like to see in the future. These results generally mirrored that of their actual training histories, above, but with an additional emphasis on mentoring and site visits, as well as other types of training that could take place on a flexible schedule:

- 59% Workshops
- 43% Mentoring or site visits
- 30% Conservation treatment
- 28% Consulted peers
- 28% Surveys or assessments
- 22% Conferences or meetings
- 20% Online training
- 12% Consulted publications, including CDs

- 8% Television programming / DVDs

Only 6% indicated that they did not wish to participate in any of these activities, while 11% said they did not know.

Respondents were asked what specific topics did they feel they needed training.

- 49% Disaster planning
- 48% Storage and housekeeping
- 44% Planning and policies
- 40% Specific types of collections care (e.g., paper, textiles)
- 37% Cataloging collections
- 29% Environmental monitoring
- 21% Digital collections
- 13% Pest management

Only 1% said no further training was needed, and only 3% said they did not know.

Staff and Training Conclusions

In comparison to the national HHI survey, Vermont organizations were more likely to be understaffed.

The survey results indicate that even in organizations where work on preservation of collections takes place, a significant percent are not carrying out basic collections care. Indeed, many organizations are not carrying out basic, critical tasks, such as preventative conservation (36% not currently doing) to preservation of audio/visual materials (64% not currently doing).

Forty two percent of the organizations had no staff of any kind spending any time on collections care. Of these organizations 32%, were public libraries, and 27%, were historical societies, and more likely than the overall sample to be municipal records. Yet most public libraries and all municipal offices do have paid staff, and while they may not have anyone specifically assigned to preservation *per se*, there appears to be an awareness of certain preservation issues. Some preservation work is completed, indicating that the actions of the staffs at these types of organizations are not necessarily thought of as collections work.

More troubling, however, is that 2/3 of organizations with no collections staff, 62%, utilized no environmental monitoring equipment, indicating a lack of manpower and/or training on long-term collections care. As we will see further along in this report, this lack of manpower, even of one person for just a few hours a week, makes a tremendous difference in the quality of collections care at Vermont collecting organizations.

Collections Funding

Budgets

Financial resources are crucial to the care of collections. Nearly a third of collecting organizations in Vermont, 31%, have overall operating budgets of under \$5,000/year. Seventeen percent have budgets between \$5,000 and \$25,000, and 20% have budgets between \$25,000 and \$100,000. Only 28% of collecting organizations, including colleges, public libraries, municipal offices, courts, historical societies, and museums, have budgets of over \$100,000/year for their entire organization.

Vermont collecting institutions tend to have much smaller budgets than most of the HHI respondents. While 68% of Vermont organizations have budgets under \$100,000/year, only 44% did in the HHI. Additionally, the national sample was over *four times* more likely to have budgets over \$500,000/year, 27% nationally versus only 6% in the Vermont sample.

Only a quarter of Vermont collecting organizations, 27%, have a specific line item in the budget for preservation. An additional 24% reported that while there is no specific line item, funds were available as needed. Nearly half, 46% said there was no line item, and no funds available.

For the 27% of organizations that *do* have a specific line item in the budget, a quarter budgeted less than \$500, and 24% budgeted between \$500 and \$1,000. Thirty-nine percent budgeted between \$1,000 and \$5,000, and 6% budgeted over \$5,000.

Since there are limited funds available for preservation, it is often difficult for institutions to afford workshops, assessments, or conservation treatment. When asked how much they would be willing to spend on a full-day training workshop, most respondents said less than \$50:

- 8% Nothing
- 49% \$50 or less
- 32% \$51 - \$100
- 11% \$101 - \$250
- 0% over \$250

Even fewer had funds for a collections survey or assessment:

- 30% Nothing
- 57% \$500 or less
- 9% \$501 - \$1,000
- 4% \$1,001 - \$5,000
- 0% over \$5,000

Conservation of one item had little financial support as well:

- 31% Nothing
- 54% \$500 or less
- 7% \$501 - \$1,000
- 7% \$1,001 - \$5,000
- 1% over \$5,000

Clearly, budgets are extremely tight, and organizations prioritize how they spend what internal funds they have for preservation. When asked to rank how they would spend funds, if available, the cumulative results were as follows:

1. Cataloging/inventory
2. Storage supplies
3. Professional conservation
4. Storage space
5. Environmental monitoring
6. Capital improvements
7. Professional consulting
8. Staff training
9. Technology
10. Permanent staff

Outside Funding

Despite extremely tight internal budgets for conservation and preservation, only 29% of responding organizations had sought out external funding for preservation. Of those that had sought out that funding, funds were received from the following sources:

- 44% Individual donor
- 40% Foundation
- 25% State-wide funding
- 24% Federal funding
- 21% Municipal/county funding
- 6% Corporate funding
- 7% No funding received

The 20 organizations that had sought federal funding (7% of entire sample) were equally likely to make requests to the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the National Endowment for the Humanities, 48% each, while 14% sought out funding from the National Park Service.

For the 21 organizations that had sought state-wide funding (7% of entire sample), nearly half, 43%, requested funds from the Preservation Trust of Vermont. Just over a third, 34%, made requests to the Division for Historic Preservation for grant money. Fourteen percent each made requests to the Vermont Collections Care Program and the Vermont Cultural Facilities program. And 9% each made requests to the Vermont Community Foundation and the Windham Foundation.

The majority of organizations had not made any requests at all to external sources. When those respondents were asked why, nearly half, 48% cited a lack of time or expertise. Nearly as many, 42% said they were unaware of sources. Twenty-nine percent said additional planning was needed, and 29% also responded that there was not enough curatorial information available. A fifth of respondents, 21%, responded that funding preservation projects was not an organizational priority. Six percent said they had made requests but were turned down, while four percent said they currently have enough funding for collections preservation, and so made no requests.

Vermont Clerks and the Preservation Surcharge

Municipal clerks in Vermont were asked if they had adopted the preservation surcharge, and just over half, 55%, said yes. When the responses of clerks that had applied the surcharge

were compared with those that had not, there were some critical differences: primarily, clerks with the surcharge were:

- 33% more likely to have completed a general survey of collections
- 50% more likely to have a budget line for preservation (100% of surcharge clerks do)
- *Slightly* more likely to make efforts to control temperature and humidity
- Are willing to spend more on workshops, assessments, and conservation treatment.

Clearly, some money, and a specific line item on preservation, makes a difference.



Collections Funding Conclusions

Money is tight at Vermont collecting organizations, and in particular smaller organizations are struggling to complete basic collections tasks, purchase basic collections supplies, and receive basic collections training. Without an influx of financial resources for collections care, free to low-cost supplies and training opportunities are likely the only way smaller collecting organizations will be able to improve current conditions of their collections. [REDACTED]

Analysis by Organization Type

Although a wide variety of collecting organizations participated in this study, most types of collecting organizations did not have enough respondents to provide statistically stable samples for analysis by organization type. Only public libraries, municipal records, and historical societies provided very stable data, while historic sites/houses provided *somewhat* stable data. Therefore, results by organization type will only be shared for these four types.

In this section, all specific results given are significantly *higher* or *lower* than the topline, or overall, results. If no specific result is given in this section that indicates that the result mirrors that of the topline result. For example, if the topline result was 50%, and historical societies came in at 52%, that is not a statistically significant difference, and would not be shared in this section. If, in contrast, historical societies came in at 78%, or 21%, however, that *would* be shared in this section.

Function

Generally, public libraries, municipal records, and historic sites are less likely to serve as many functions as other types of organizations. Over a quarter of public libraries, 27%, have no additional function at all, versus 20% topline results. When libraries *do* have an additional function, they are *less* likely for it to be archives, public records, historical society, or historic site. Municipal records are also less likely to serve as an archive, historical society, historic site, or an art museum. And while historic sites are more likely to also serve as an archive, over a third of them, 35%, have no additional function.

In contrast, historical societies are *more* likely to play additional roles, but only in certain areas. Historical societies are 50% more likely than the overall sample to also have archives, and a full third of them are also historic sites. Yet they are less likely to also serve as a library or an art museum.

While historical societies and historic sites maintain a fairly wide variety of collections types, as would be expected given their missions, municipal records maintain fairly narrow collections of books, unbound sheets, digital materials, and some photographic collections. Public libraries, however, do have a surprising amount of untraditional library collections, with 45% reporting art objects, 39% reporting photographic collections, and 28% reporting historic objects.⁶ Yet caring for these objects is presenting a challenge to libraries, as one librarian wrote in “we are not funded to take care of historical collections and hardly have the funds to do our day-to-day business.”

Conditions

Storage Space and Security

While libraries (83%), municipal records (90%), and historic sites (91%) well outpaced the topline average (70%) for owning their own storage spaces, historical societies were significantly less likely to own their own storage space, only 40%. Instead, historical societies

⁶ Historic sites are, however, significantly less likely to maintain digital media, moving image collections, recorded sound collections. As an example of the narrowness of municipal records, only 11% have moving image collections and only 9% have historic objects.

were much more likely to rely on donated space (46% versus 28% topline), and were *three times* more likely to rely on private homes (17% versus 5% topline).

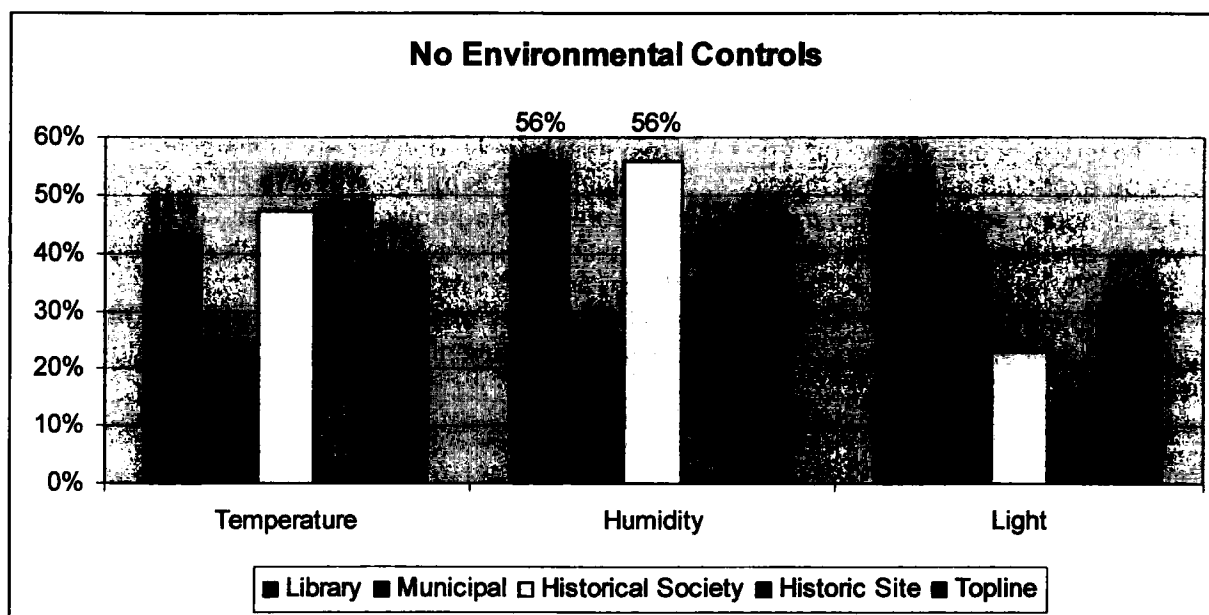
The adequacy of the storage space varied as well. In particular, while municipal records were three times more likely than the topline to say almost all of their storage space was "adequate," historical societies were two times more likely to say that *none* of their space was "adequate." Additionally, historical societies are struggling to find space to store all of their collections, and were 50% more likely than the topline to say they need to at least double their storage space.

Historical societies were also the least likely to have some kind of security system in place, with 62% reporting no system at all versus 50% topline. Public libraries and municipal records were also less likely to have systems in place, with 55% and 57% reporting no system, respectively. In contrast, historic sites were much more likely to have some kind of system, with only 29% reporting no system.

Environmental Controls

Overall, 26% of responding organizations indicated they had some kind of environmental monitoring system. In particular, however, historical societies are the least likely to have any kind of system, with 63% having no system of any kind, compared with 50% topline.

And, as seen below, libraries are the most likely to not have any kind of specific controls for temperature, humidity, or light. Historical societies are also falling short for temperature and humidity controls. In contrast, overall, municipal records are making more efforts to control their environments.



Needs Assessment

While all organizations conveyed needs, the levels of perceived need varied widely among organization types.

Public libraries. Overall, libraries were less likely to indicate as many needs as the topline. In particular, they were more likely to say they had *no additional need* for finding aids/cataloging, environmental controls, light controls, preservation of digital materials, or pest management. They were, however, slightly more likely to say they had an urgent need for emergency planning.

Municipal offices. Like libraries, municipal offices exhibited fewer needs. In particular, they were more likely to say they had *no additional need* for finding aids/cataloging, conditions surveys, staff training, security, environmental controls, and pest management.

Historic sites. Historic sites were also less likely to express needs. In particular, they were more likely to say they had *no additional need* for environmental controls, conservation treatment, pest management, and assistance with policies.

Historical societies. In short, historical societies need everything. They were *more* likely to say they had need for finding aids/cataloging, conditions surveys, staff training, security, environmental controls, conservation treatment, preservation of digital materials, pest management, emergency preparation, and assistance with policies. In addition, they were more likely to say they had urgent need for finding aids/cataloging and conditions surveys. These small organizations, with the smallest resources, need the most.

Damage and Loss to Collections

The amount of loss or damage to collections also varied by organization type. Overall, public libraries and municipal offices were significantly less likely to report loss or damage to the collections, with the exception of theft and vandalism at public libraries (a not surprising result given the increasing use of collections by a wide variety of the general public).

In contrast, historical societies and historic sites were significantly more likely to report some loss or damage. For historical societies, damage and loss was more likely to be reported due to water, improper storage, or deterioration. Historic sites also reported greater loss due to improper storage and deterioration, but also due to light, airborne particulates, and were twice as likely to report loss due to pests.

Collections Catalog

Given the nature of circulating collections and the emphasis in the past two decades to digitizing card catalogs in public libraries, it is unsurprising that libraries are way ahead of other collecting organizations when it comes to cataloging and access to catalogs. Indeed, 63% of public libraries report at least three-quarters of their collection is accessible via a catalog, compared with 35% topline. Libraries are more likely to utilize professional software, 54% versus 42% topline, and are significantly more likely than the topline to have online access available, either for organizational use or for the public, to their catalogs.

The other types of organizations generally lagged behind the topline results. A third of municipal offices, 35%, report no catalog at all, versus 27% topline. Even more historical societies, 42%, also report no catalog, and an additional 28% report less than a quarter of their collection is cataloged, versus 16% topline. That means that 70% of historical societies have less than 25% of their collection cataloged versus 43% topline.

About half of municipal offices, historical societies, and historic sites with catalogs are using some kind of software, but these organizations also report significant use of paper records as well. While only 68% of organizations with catalogs overall utilize hard copies, 79% of historical societies do, 88% of historic sites do, and 90% of municipal offices do. These organizations are also significantly less likely to have online access to their catalogs, either for organizational use or for the public. While 58% topline report no online access, 77% of municipal offices and historical societies have no online access, and 94% of historical societies have none as well. Public access to collections via the internet was even lower.

Conditions by Organization Type Conclusions

Public libraries clearly indicated different needs than other collecting organizations, and this is largely understandable due to the different nature of collections at public libraries. Unlike other collections, library collections are designed to circulate among the general public, and are for the most part easily replaced. And while many public libraries do have *some* collections that are irreplaceable and rare, for most, the focus is on serving the needs of their community via that circulating collection. Therefore, it is not surprising that public libraries are generally showing less concern for collections care than other collecting organizations.

Municipal clerks clearly expressed needs, and that should not be overlooked, but their needs do not appear to be as extensive as other types of collecting organizations.

Historical societies, by contrast, demonstrated the greatest needs. They struggle to adequately store too much in too small a space that largely does not have environmental controls. Their needs are great, and may be, in some cases desperate. Additionally, while historic sites did not show as great a need as historical societies, their needs are significant as well.

Mission and Collections Planning

Mission

Almost all historical societies and historic sites have preservation in their missions, 85% and 91% respectively, compared with 65% topline. Significantly, 64% of libraries surveyed do not include preservation in their missions.

Additionally, over half of libraries and municipal records do not have caring for digital collections in their mission, compared with 45% topline.

Surveys and Long-Range Planning

Similarly, libraries are significantly less likely to have a long-range preservation plan, with 76% without one compared with 53% topline. Historic sites are the most likely to have such a plan, with 71% having one in place compared with only 16% topline.

Libraries are also significantly less likely to have completed a general survey of the collection, with 67% reporting never having undertaken one compared with 49% topline. In contrast, municipal offices are the most likely to have undertaken a general survey, 31% versus 22% topline. Only 35% of municipal offices have never completed one.

Disaster Planning

While 67% of organizations have no emergency plan, historical societies were even less likely to have one in place. Eighty-four percent of historical societies have no plan. Historic sites, however, have clearly made disaster planning a priority, with only 48% reporting no plan.

Of the organizations that have no emergency plan, public libraries were more likely to say that they had no time to plan, or that it just was not a priority. Historic sites also cited a lack of time. Historical societies were more likely to say they were unaware of the need for a plan, or to cite a lack of expertise for writing a plan.

Overall only 32% of organization reported they did not backup their collections catalog with an offsite copy, but municipal offices were even less likely to keep that offsite copy, with 45% reporting none. Historical societies were much more likely to report an offsite backup, with only 19% reporting none.

For those off-site backups, historic sites were much more likely to rely on paper copies, 77% versus 62% topline, and only 29% used digital backups compared with 42% topline.

Mission and Planning by Organization Conclusions

As noted earlier, long-term collections care is not a high priority for public libraries due to the nature and use of the majority of their collections. When it comes to planning for preservation, libraries are doing less than other types of collecting organizations.

Compared to other types of Vermont collecting organizations, municipal offices appear to have completed more planning and surveys, though that does not, by any means, indicate a lack of need.

Historic sites have done better than other organizations in creating disaster plans, but still have significant needs. But historical societies once again exhibit the most dramatic need, but also a lack of awareness of the need for plans to ensure the continued care of collections both on a day-to-day basis and in the event of disaster.

Staff and Training

Staffing Levels

In part because libraries and municipal offices usually employ staff in the first place, due to higher budgets, they are more likely to have a staff member spend some regular time on collections care. While libraries were only slightly more likely to pay up to one staff person, 36% versus 31% topline, municipal offices were almost twice as likely to have up to one paid staff person, 57%.

Historic sites and especially historical societies were significantly more likely to have no paid staff spending any time on collections care. For historic sites, 71% reported no paid staff versus 63% (topline?), while 89%, nearly all, historical societies reported likewise.

Historical societies were, however, more likely to have volunteer help focused on collections. Only 44% of historical societies reported no volunteer help whatsoever, compared to 62% of topline, and 43% reported up to one full-time equivalent versus 32% topline. In contrast,

municipal offices and historic sites were significantly more likely to report no volunteer help with collections, 85% and 75% respectively, compared to 62% topline.

Libraries and historical societies were, overall, significantly more likely than the topline to say they do not spend time on preservation and conservation efforts, while municipal offices were generally more likely to say they spend time on these functions, or seek out external staff to perform the tasks.

Staff Training

With their focus not necessarily on long-term collections care, libraries were overall less likely to have staff, whether paid or unpaid, who had completed any training on collections care. Municipal offices were also less likely, except for attending conferences, to have completed additional training. In contrast, historic sites were more likely to have completed additional collections care training.

The types of training desired by the different organizations also varied. Libraries, despite having lower levels of training overall, were more likely than the topline to say they desired mentoring and site visits. Historical societies were more likely to want workshops, surveys/assessments, conservation, on-line training, and publications, and historic sites were more likely to want workshops, surveys/assessments, conservation, conferences, and peer advice. In contrast, however, municipal offices were less likely to want additional training sessions of any format.

Yet municipal offices did desire additional training on certain topics. In particular, municipal offices were 50% more likely to want training on emergency planning, 76% versus 48% topline. They were also 50% more likely to desire training on collections planning and policies, 67% versus 44% topline. Libraries were also significantly more likely to desire emergency planning, 70% versus 48% topline, but they were less likely to choose any of the other collections topics suggested.

Historical societies, in contrast, desired training on the nuts and bolts of basic collections care. Fifty-nine percent wanted training on cataloging, versus 37% topline, and 56% wanted training on basic storage and housekeeping, versus 48% topline. Only a third desired emergency planning training, but as we saw earlier, many historical societies were also unaware of a need for emergency planning.

Historic sites also desired training on basic collections storage and housekeeping, 57% versus 48% topline, and they also desired training on specific types of collections, 50% versus 41% topline. Like historical societies, only a third desired emergency planning, but as we saw earlier, historic sites were more likely than other types of collecting organizations to have an emergency plan, so this may reflect a perceived lack of need since more plans are already in place.

Staff and Training Conclusions

While all organizations clearly demonstrate a need for additional hands, and training, in order to care for collections, the perception of need differs greatly. Libraries, that, as mentioned above, utilize most of their collections differently than other collecting organizations, perceive the least amount of need for additional training, despite often having collections of art, objects, and photographs that may need care. Historical societies clearly demonstrate a high degree of need, but also a degree of lack of education as to the need for certain types of preservation activities, and training for them, such as emergency planning. Additionally, historic sites are the

least likely to have any type of collections staff, paid or unpaid, indicating a critical need for focused attention. In contrast, municipal offices are the most likely to have paid staff and perceive the least need for additional training. This perception may indicate a need for more education; since municipal offices *sometimes* maintain untraditional collections, such as moving images, art, and objects.

Funding

Budgets

Public libraries and municipal offices, which usually have regular community funding, generally have larger budgets than other types of organizations. Almost all historic sites, however, have organizational budgets under \$100,000/year (84% versus 68% topline). Historical societies are even more cash-strapped, with 71% having organizational budgets of \$5,000/year or less, versus 31% topline.

Unsurprisingly, then, historical societies were the least likely to have a line for preservation in their budget, 71% having no preservation budget (versus 46% topline). Libraries too were less likely to have a budget line for preservation, with 64% having no preservation budget.

Municipal offices were the most likely to have a specific line in their budgets for preservation, 65% versus 27% topline. A significant factor in this was the use of the preservation surcharge as 100% of clerks that have the surcharge have a line in their budget for preservation.

The amount different types of organizations were willing to spend on training varied as well. While overall 49% of respondents would spend up to \$1 - \$50 on a day-long workshop, libraries, municipal records, and historic sites were more likely to stipulate this small amount as the maximum (59%, 57%, and 62% respectively).

Municipal offices were, however, less likely to say they would spend nothing on a collections survey (23% versus 30% topline) and more likely to say under \$500 (74% versus 57% topline). But they were generally less likely to be willing to spend as much on the conservation of one item. The results here of municipal offices shows the big difference between those with and without the preservation surcharge, as those with the surcharge were more likely to spend a bit more on workshops, surveys, and conservation, while generally municipal clerks were more likely to spend less on workshops and conservation. That surcharge makes a significant difference.

Similar to municipal offices, historic sites were less likely to say they had no funds to spend on a collections survey, only 14% versus 30% topline, and 64% said they would spend up to \$500.

Historical societies were more likely to say they could not spend anything on a collections survey, 38% versus 30% topline, but more likely to say they would spend up to \$500 on the conservation of one item.

With tight funds, and different priorities, if funds did come available for collections care, different organizations had different priorities for how they would spend those dollars, as follows:

Libraries	Municipal Offices	Historical Societies
1. Cataloging	1. Conservation	1. Storage supplies
2. Storage supplies	2. Environmental monitoring	2. Cataloging
3. Staff training	3. Storage space	3. Storage space

While libraries and historical societies are focused on basics, municipal offices are indicating they would spend funds on more advanced collections activities, such as conservation and environmental monitoring.

Outside Funding

The majority of libraries and municipal offices have also not sought out external funding specifically for preservation; 83% and 74% have not versus 65% topline. Historical societies regularly look to outside funding, however, with 57% doing so versus 29% topline.

Historical societies primarily look to state-wide funding and individual donors to fill those collections needs. Of historical societies that have sought out external funding, 42% had received funding from a state-wide source, versus 25% topline, and 50% had received funding from an individual donor, versus 44% topline.

Reasons for not seeking out funding also varied. Libraries were twice as likely to say seeking funding for collections care was not an organizational priority, 42% versus 21% topline. Municipal offices were 50% more likely than the topline to not be aware of sources, 66% versus 42% topline. And historical societies that did not seek outside funding had a host of reasons, including being significantly more likely to cite no time or expertise, the need for additional planning, a lack of sufficient curatorial information, and being unaware of sources.

Funding Conclusions

Budgets are tight, and even when preservation is a priority, surveyed organizations have few dollars to allocate to the care of collections. Yet needs are great, whether for the basics or more sophisticated levels of care.

Overall Conclusions by Collecting Organization Type

Public Libraries

As noted above, public libraries utilize collections in different ways than other collecting organizations. Namely, their collections circulate to the general public, and the majority of their collections are easily replaced. Therefore public libraries responded to the survey in ways that indicate little long-term collections care is taking place, and that little is needed. In part, this is understandable, but many public libraries care for *some* collections that are rare and valuable. Care must be taken to ensure that these collections are properly housed, stored, and preserved safely, and that entails additional awareness and oversight by public librarians.

Municipal Offices

When compared to other types of collecting organizations, municipal offices appear to have collections care under control. That is, they are more likely to have staff and budgets, greater resources, and greater training. Although municipal offices, are doing better than other types of

organization, there is still a need for increased time and funding to preserve important documents that must be maintained for legal purposes, as well as being part of the town's heritage.

Historic Sites

Historic sites are the least likely to have individuals responsible for collections care, but they are also the most likely to have emergency plans. This contrast illustrates the mixed survey results for historic sites. Although there appears to be a high degree of awareness of needs, and a fair amount of long-term planning taking place, the staff and budgets to carry out those plans, and day-to-day care, are lacking, threatening these collections.

Historical Societies

Historical societies have the most need of all of the surveyed institutions. They tend to need people, money, time, space, and training. These organizations are the most likely to be run by volunteers, and they may be dedicated to the organization, there is a lack of collections care, ranging from long-term planning to environmental controls to emergency planning. Although all types of collections have needs, the most critical threat to long-term care of collections is at the local historical societies, particularly those who have budgets under \$5,000, no dedicated storage space (including a tendency to utilize private homes for collections storage), and no individuals who understand collections needs.

Analysis by Budget Size

Although collecting organizations in this study had organizational budgets ranging from hardly anything (one organization said their budget was "more like \$100) to over \$500,000/year, data was not stable for all budget categories. Data was very stable for organizations with budgets under \$5,000, between \$5,000 - \$25,000, and between \$25,000 - \$100,000. Additionally, it was *somewhat* stable for organizations with budgets between \$100,000 - \$250,000, and \$250,000 - \$500,000. Data was not stable, and not analyzed, for organizations with budgets over \$500,000/year.

In this section, all specific results given are significantly *higher* or *lower* than the topline, or overall, results. If no specific result is given in this section that indicates that the result mirrors that of the topline result.

Function

Generally, as seen above, libraries and municipal offices have higher budgets, while historical societies had the smallest budgets. For those organizations with budgets under \$5,000/year, three-quarters were nonprofits, while municipally-funded organizations (such as municipal offices and many public libraries) tended to have budgets between \$25,000 and \$500,000/year. Finally, organizations with larger budgets tended to maintain a wider variety of collections than smaller organizations, which tended to focus on fewer types of collections.

Current Conditions

Storage Space and Conditions

With higher budgets, storage conditions improve and respondents at larger organizations were generally more likely to deem more of their storage space as "adequate" than respondents from smaller organizations.

A small difference in budget size made a big difference in the type of storage space used. While three-quarters of organizations with budgets over \$5,000 owned their own building, organizations with budgets under \$5,000 were much more likely to rely on donated space, a shared facility, or a private home.

The presence of environmental monitoring and security systems correlated with budget size as well. For security systems, only when budgets rise over \$100,000 do more than half of collecting organizations have a security system, and the same thing was found for environmental monitoring systems.

The use of monitoring equipment also correlated with budget size. Organizations with budgets under \$25,000 were only half as likely to use any monitoring equipment at all as organizations with budgets over \$250,000.

Needs Assessment

Interestingly, there were no statistical differences by budget size when collections needs were assessed. But though there were not statistical differences, generally organizations with

budgets over \$100,000 indicated less need. That is, while the need differences were minimal, larger organizations consistently, by only a few percentage points, exhibited less need.

Damage and Loss to Collections

While overall there were no dramatic differences by budget size when evaluating loss and damage to collections, larger organizations were *slightly* more likely to report loss from handling, vandalism, and theft. As public libraries also were higher on these factors, and as they tend to have larger budgets, we believe their responses are driving these slight differences.

Collections Catalog

Unsurprisingly, larger organizations are more likely to have more of their collections cataloged, as they are more likely to have at least some resources, and at least someone, even part-time, focused on the collection and its care. Organizations with budgets of \$25,000 or more mirrored topline results on these questions, with organizations between \$5,000 and \$25,000 were not as likely to have quite so much cataloged. **For organizations with budgets under \$5,000, over half have none of their collections cataloged.**

When organizations do have a catalog, smaller organizations are more likely to rely on paper, but just over half still utilize some type of software. There is a greater use of professional software as budgets rise. Similarly, a greater percentage of the collection is available online at organizations with larger budgets.

Vermont Current Collections Conditions Conclusions

Clearly, money makes a big difference in the condition of collections, with organizations with budgets over \$100,000 exhibiting less need than smaller organizations, particularly those under \$25,000. But even though larger organizations appear to be in better shape, that does not imply that they do not have critical needs for resources and assistance.

While smaller organizations were not significantly different than larger organizations in assessing need, and reported similar amounts or less loss or damage to collections, we believe that these responses mask suboptimum storage conditions and damage that, with larger budgets and staff, these organizations would be aware of and could address. Indeed, for the very smallest organizations, how can collections, and their needs, be properly assessed when most organizations with budgets under \$5,000 have no catalog at all?

Collections Planning

Mission

Smaller organizations, namely those with budgets under \$25,000/year, are about 60% *more* likely to have preservation specifically mentioned in their mission than organizations with budgets between \$25,000 and \$250,000. Further analysis indicates that the primary reason for this difference is the large number of historical societies with very small budgets. Historical societies are *more* likely to have preservation in their mission. Municipal offices and public libraries with somewhat larger budgets are *less* likely to include preservation in their mission.

Mission statements of larger organizations are very slightly more likely to include digital collections than smaller organizations.

Surveys and Long-Range Planning

Generally, organizations with higher budgets are more likely to have a long-range preservation plan, and more likely to have completed a general conditions survey.

Disaster Planning

Similarly, organizations with higher budgets are more likely to have an emergency/disaster plan than smaller organizations. In particular, organizations with budgets under \$25,000/year are twice as likely to have no plan as organizations with budgets over \$25,000/year. These respondents primary reason for not having a plan was that they were unaware of the need for one.

Mission and Planning Conclusions

Money makes a difference, even a small amount, as larger organizations are more likely to be aware of current collections conditions, plan for the future, and plan for the worst. Smaller organizations are doing far less planning, but lack of awareness of the importance for planning may be an issue as well.

Staff and Training

Staffing Levels

Unsurprisingly, smaller organizations have significantly less staff available than larger organizations. Organizations with budgets under \$5,000 were nearly three times more likely to say they had no paid collections staff at all than organizations with budgets over \$100,000 (93% versus 34%). And organizations with budgets over \$100,000 were over nine times more likely to have at least someone paid to work on the collections, whether part-time or full-time, than organizations with budgets under \$5,000.

Larger organizations were also more likely to carry out preservation and conservation activities, and to use their own staff for those activities.

Staff Training

Organizations with budgets under \$25,000 were far less likely to have completed any collections training during the past five years. In contrast, larger organizations want more training programs with a wider variety of subjects covered, especially emergency training.

Staff and Training Conclusions

Organizations with tiny budgets have the most need for assistance on collections care, yet these are the very organizations who are the least likely to have obtained assistance through training. Most troubling, however, they are also less likely to desire additional training, indicating that the organizations with the most need are the least likely to recognize it or seek out assistance.

Collections Funding

Budgets

As expected, larger organizations are more likely to have a line in their budgets specifically for preservation. Yet when it comes to what respondents would spend money on, if money were available, there were some differences even between the smaller-sized organizations, as seen below:

	Under \$5,000	\$5,000 - \$25,000	\$25,000 - \$100,000
First priority	Cataloging and Storage supplies (tied)	Cataloging	Cataloging and Environmental monitoring (tied)
Second priority		Conservation	
Third priority	Storage space	Capital improvements	Storage space

While cataloging is a top priority for organizations with budgets under \$100,000, even organizations with budgets between \$5,000 and \$25,000 had more advanced preservation priorities than those under \$5,000, who are struggling with the basics, such as storage supplies. (Data on organizations with budgets over \$100,000 not stable enough for analysis on this question.)

Outside Funding

Larger organizations were significantly more likely to have attempted, and secured, outside funding than smaller organizations. Three-quarters of organizations with budgets under \$100,000 have not even sought outside funding. Additional analysis of sources of outside funding was not stable enough to analyze further.

Overall Conclusions by Organizational Budget Size

A little money makes a big difference in the care of collections. While organizations with budgets under \$5,000 are struggling with staffing (whether paid or unpaid), security, storage space, and basics such as storage supplies. Even organizations with budgets between \$5,000 and \$25,000 are indicating more time and resources have been poured into collections care.

But while a little money makes a big difference, even organizations with substantial budgets are still struggling to adequately care for their collections.

Analysis by Paid Staffing Levels

Although collecting organizations in this study had paid staffing levels that varied from no one to five or more full-time individuals, data was only stable for organizations that had no staff or less than one full-time staff person focused on the collections. **Therefore, data was not stable, and not analyzed, for organizations with one or more collections staff members. Readers should keep in mind that this section refers to *paid* staff time for collections, not volunteer staff, and not the time of paid staff focusing on other organizational tasks.**

In this section, all specific results given are significantly *higher* or *lower* than the topline, or overall, results. If no specific result is given in this section that indicates that the result mirrors that of the topline result.

Function

Historical societies are the most likely to have no staff at all, comprising 40% of the organizations with no staff versus comprising 28% of the topline sample. Municipal offices are more likely to have part-time collections care; a third of respondents with less than one paid collections staff person are municipal records, versus 17% of the entire sample.

Nearly two-thirds of organizations with no staff are nonprofit organizations. Organizations with part-time staff are more likely to be municipally owned (clerks, county, or public libraries).

Organizations with no staff are more likely to collect historic objects (such as historical societies), while organizations with at least part-time staff are more likely to have books and digital materials (such as public libraries and municipal offices).

Current Conditions

Storage Space and Conditions

Organizations with no paid staff are more likely to use donated space, while organizations with at least part-time staff are significantly more likely to own their own space, 80% versus 70% topline.

While organizations with no or part-time staff were less likely to feel they have "adequate" storage space than better-staffed organizations, even having some part-time staff made a big difference. Organizations with part-time staff were more likely to say between a quarter and three-quarters of their storage space was "adequate," while organizations with no staff were significantly more likely to say none of their space was "adequate," 45% versus 37% topline.

As with adequacy of space, having at least part-time staff also made a big difference in the environment collections were stored in. Organizations with part-time help were twice as likely as organizations with no staff to have an environmental monitoring system, and were twice as likely to have a security system. Organizations with no staff were less likely to control for temperature and humidity than organizations with some staff. And 59% of organizations with no staff had no monitoring equipment, versus 52% topline. In contrast, only 44% of organizations with some staff had no equipment, and those with equipment were significantly more likely to use a thermometer and a hygrometer.

Needs Assessment

While overall there were few statistical differences between organizations with staff, and those without, generally, organizations without staff were *slightly* more likely to indicate that did not know if they needed specific things relating to collections care. Organizations with part-time staff were slightly more likely to indicate specific needs, and significantly more likely to say they needed better security (49% versus 34% topline) and preservation of digital materials (38% versus 33% topline).

Damage and Loss to Collections

Like with needs, organizations with no paid staff at all were more likely to indicate they did not know if there had been damage to their collections. In contrast, overall organizations with part-time staff were slightly more likely to be aware of damage and loss that had taken place.

Collections Catalog

Again, having at least some part-time help makes a difference. Organizations with at least part-time help were more likely to say over half of their collection was cataloged, 55% versus 44% topline. Organizations with no staff were significantly more likely to say none of their collection was cataloged, 32% versus 27% topline. Additionally, organizations with no staff were less likely to use any software for cataloging, while organizations with some staff were more likely to utilize some kind of software, whether professional or off-the-shelf.

Vermont Current Collections Conditions Conclusions

When there is no staff focused on collections care, not even for an hour a week, collections suffer. Yet organizations with no staff may not know the extent of that suffering, as they are generally more likely to indicate they do know if their collections have needs, or have suffered damage or loss. Without the focused attention of at least one individual, for a small amount of time, who then becomes familiar with the collection and its status, care suffers. The difference is resources, with even a small amount of money significantly impacting the care of collections for the better.

But even though organizations with some part-time staff are doing significantly better than organizations with no staff, organizations with some staff still have very significant needs and challenges to ensure collections are properly cared for and secured.

Collections Planning

Surveys and Long-Range Planning

Organizations with no staff are significantly less likely to have a conducted a general survey of the collections; 59% have none versus 49% topline. Organizations with part-time staff, however, are more likely to have a survey, with only 33% having none versus 49% topline.

Disaster Planning

Disaster plans are in short supply among organizations with no staff. Over three-quarters of these organizations have no emergency/disaster plan. Organizations with at least some staff are significantly more likely to have a plan, with 56% having no plan versus 67% topline. For

organizations with some staff, the primary reasons given for having no plan are that it is not an organizational priority or no time to write one. For organizations with no staff, the primary reasons are unawareness of need for a plan and no time to write one.

Organizations with some staff are significantly more likely to maintain off-site copies of collections records, 41% versus 32%, and are less likely to maintain those copies on paper (46% versus 62%). Instead, they are more likely to keep backups via microfilm or remote server. Those organizations with no staff that do keep off-site copies of collections records are more likely to rely on paper, 73% versus 62%.

Mission and Planning Conclusions

As seen above, organizations with at least some staff are doing far more to plan for the futures of their collections than organizations with no staff. And as seen before, awareness of need is a critical issue for organizations with no staff.

Staff and Training

Staffing Levels

Organizations with no staff are doubly in a bind because they are more likely to have no volunteer collections staff as well. Additionally, having no staff, these organizations are less likely to carry out preservation activities at all, while organizations with at least part-time staff are much more likely to be carrying out more preservation activities.

Staff Training

Those organizations with no staff are less likely to have had anyone complete any training, 30% reporting no training in the past five years versus 24% topline. The training topics they desire the most are the basics, cataloging and collections storage and housekeeping.

Organizations that have at least part-time staff are more likely to have completed some training the past five years; only 15% report no training versus 24% topline. They desire more mentoring and site visits and more workshops, and would be particularly desirous of training on emergency planning.

Staff and Training Conclusions

Preservation activities, and training, suffer when there is no staff to be trained or to understand what activities must take place to begin with. Having some help, some of the time, again makes a big difference.

Collections Funding

Budgets

As expected, organizations with larger organizational budgets are more likely to have staff than organizations with smaller budgets. They are more likely to have a line in the budget specifically for preservation of collections, and are also willing to spend slightly more on workshops, conservation of an item, and conditions surveys.

Organizations with some staff also had more sophisticated priorities if they were to suddenly receive funding for collections, while organizations with no staff would prioritize the basics, as seen below:

	0 Staff	<1 Staff
First priority	Cataloging	Conservation
Second priority	Storage supplies	Environmental monitoring
Third priority	Storage space	Capital improvements

Outside Funding

Organizations without staff of any sort are less likely to seek outside funding for collections care, with 70% responding they have not sought out funding versus 65% topline. While lack of time/experience is the top reason cited for not seeking out funding, these respondents were also more likely to cite lack of curatorial information as a reason as well.

Overall Conclusions by Paid Staffing Levels

What a difference someone's focused attention makes. Organizations with part-time staff were significantly more likely to be doing more to properly care for, and store, their collections. Organizations with no staff simply lack the time and resources, as well as knowledge and awareness, to keep up.

It would be dangerous, however, to infer from this that organizations that are slightly larger, and have some staff, do not have absolutely critical needs. They do. Yet when compared to very small organizations, their needs pale.

Conclusions and Recommendations

When the Heritage Health Index's report was released in 2005, it sent a strong signal of warning to collecting organizations throughout the country: our nation's cultural heritage was, and is, under threat due to a lack of time and resources at collecting organizations. This report was, in no way, a criticism of collecting organizations, who strive to do the best they can with few resources, but instead a call to action to funders, and the public, to help these organizations better steward the pots, pans, letters, ledgers, paintings, and specimens that record mankind's contributions.

Similarly, the results from the Vermont Collecting to Connections study should also be seen as a call to action. The collections in Vermont are also at risk, not due to willful negligence by collecting organizations but due to a lack of time, resources, and money.

Direct comparisons of the topline results of the Vermont sample and the national sample should be treated with caution, however, if one does not keep in mind the differences in the two studies.

First, unlike the national study, the Vermont study included municipal and court records. As an important part of the tangible record of Vermont, it was felt that they were too important to omit. These municipal records holders, due to the number of their responses and how they responded, did affect the results. That is, enough responded to statistically affect the results, and since these organizations indicated more comprehensive care of their collections than the rest of the overall sample, they *slightly* pulled the results higher than if they had been omitted from the study.

Second, Vermont is unusual in that it has a very large number of collecting organizations, *nearly eight times* as many museums per 100,000 people than the United States as a whole. This means that Vermont has a large number of smaller organizations, all striving to care for collections that reflect the history and culture of their communities. And, as seen in this report, these very small organizations have collections under the most threat due to a lack of time, resources, and money. Indeed, they wrote in that their most pressing needs are basic collections things like cataloging, storage supplies, and better space, as well as "warm bodies that are willing to be trained" and, typed in all caps, "MONEY." Another impediment for many (but not all) of these very small organizations is a lack of awareness of *how* to store collections.

To illustrate the difference in organizational budget size of the two samples, in the national sample the median budget size indicated was between \$100,000 and \$500,000. In contrast, in Vermont the median budget size indicated was between \$5,000 and \$25,000. As we saw when completing analysis by budget size, this makes a tremendous difference in care, and it should be anticipated that Vermont would therefore have results that indicate less comprehensive care of collections. And indeed, the Vermont results do indicate that. The net effect is that the smaller organizations in Vermont pulled the results *slightly lower* than seen nationally.

If, however, organizations with budgets under \$5,000 are excluded from the sample, then Vermont collecting organizations generally mirror the collections care recorded by the national sample. But if these organizations *and* municipal records are excluded, Vermont's results are slightly behind the national sample. Overall, Vermont's collecting organizations are not able to even maintain the same standards found in the nationwide study. And the national study found much more needed to be done to ensure the future of collections.

In short, Vermont collections need help, and those organizations with the most need are those with budgets under \$25,000 and who have no staff focused on collections.

A Ray of Hope

There is a promising trend within the Vermont data, however. That is the work of the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance (VMGA). This consortium of museums, galleries, and historical societies, has done much to educate, train, and fund collections care at small organizations throughout the state. (Respondents who were members of the Vermont Municipal Clerks and Treasurer's Association (VMCTA), like VMGA respondents, appear to take more proactive care of their collections. Unfortunately, however, the number of VMCTA members was not sufficient for the data to be considered stable enough for analysis.)

The importance of their work became clear when the responses of VMGA members were analyzed separately. Despite VMGA members being twice as likely to be historical societies (47% versus 24% topline) and to have smaller budgets (38% under \$5,000 versus 31% topline), these respondents were making significantly more efforts to actively care for collections and preserve them for the future than non-member organizations of similar size and resources.

In particular, compared to the topline average, VMGA members were more likely to:

- attempt to control temperature and humidity
- use environmental monitoring equipment
- have a security system
- specifically state needs, indicating higher awareness of collections challenges
- be aware of damage or loss, indicating greater familiarity with collections
- have a long-range preservation plan
- have completed a general survey of collection
- have at least one volunteer focused on collections care
- desire additional training, especially for specific types of collections
- carry out collections tasks
- seek out external funding for collections

Overall, despite few resources, VMGA members indicate a much higher awareness of collections issues and are much more likely to be proactive in addressing them. These organizations recognize how important VMGA is to them, saying time and again in their written-in comments how VMGA assisted with surveys, conservation, and training. Or, as one organization wrote in, "VMGA . . . showed us what we needed to be doing" while another said "VMGA is the most valuable tool we have." Absolutely.

The work of VMGA is clearly paying off, and this work should be continued and expanded to better reach other organizations throughout the state, for the sake of Vermont's cultural heritage. In particular, work should be expanded to public libraries, for whom long-term collections care is not as high a priority, yet who often have at least some cultural/historic collections for which they are responsible. The model VMGA has created could be expanded to assist public librarians in a cost-effective, and resource-effective, way.

Additionally, greater support of VMGA would allow workshops and training to be kept at a very low-cost. As seen in this report, 49% of respondents would not pay more than \$50 for an all-day workshop, and an additional 8% would pay nothing. With organizational budgets that tight, support for VMGA that allows workshops to be held for \$50 or less will enable training to be spread much further. Given that the work of VMCTA indicates they are doing fine work as well, VMGA and VMCTA should consider working together to ensure efforts are not duplicated and to further extend their services.

Recommendations

The results of this study, while generally mirroring those of the HHI study, also give us a greater imperative to assist the large number, and variety of collecting organizations in Vermont.

- Organizations must provide safe, secure conditions for the objects and archives in their care.
- Up-to-date emergency planning is necessary at all collecting organizations.
 - Greater support from state officials to mandate emergency plans for government agencies
 - Plan-writing assistance, on a one-to-one basis, if needed, for museums
- Responsibility of collections must be assigned to an individual, whether a staff person or a volunteer.
 - State-wide public relations initiative to recruit, train volunteers
 - Consideration of regional collections managers to directly work with organizations
- Additional training is needed to ensure collections are cared for properly, and for some, awareness of training is necessary.
 - Greater resources provided for low-cost training
 - Outreach to smallest organizations to build awareness
 - Outreach to public libraries, municipal offices to assist in care of unusual objects in their collections
 - Additional training on archival and paper materials, electronic media
- Advocacy to the public is critical to ensure public and private support to provide the resources, and good will, to allow collections to survive.
 - Statewide public relations initiative to build support for local history, and its collections
- While all collecting organizations have needs, in particular outreach must be made to small historical societies that have the most threatened collections.
 - Statewide funding for collections care for local history organizations

Fortunately, Vermont has some of these pieces in place through the work of VMGA and, possibly, VMCTA. This work must be expanded, as the needs of collections throughout the state are tremendous.

Vermont has a unique history and culture that is unlike that of any other US state. Its history and culture deserves to be maintained under the best possible conditions now and in the future.

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VT Connecting to Collections Advisory Committee

Jacqueline Calder – Curator, Vermont Historical Society
Paul Carnahan – Librarian, Vermont Historical Society
Eileen Corcoran – Director, Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance
Mary Jo Davis- Paper Conservator in private practice
Paul Donavan – State Law Librarian, Vermont State Library
John Dumville – Chief of Historic Sites, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation
Kevin Graffagnino, former Director, Vermont Historical Society
Mark Hudson- Director, Vermont Historical Society
Richard Kerschner – Chief Conservator, Shelburne Museum
Ann Lawless – Director, American Precision Museum
Jeffery Marshall – Head of Special Collections, University of Vermont
Sybil Brigham McShane- retired Vermont State Librarian
Martha Reid- Vermont State Librarian
Gregory Sanford – Vermont State Archivist

This project would not have been possible without the cooperation and participation of the following organizations that completed the survey. Thank you.

Alburgh Historical Society, Inc.
Aldrich Public Library
American Precision Museum
Arvin A. Brown Public Library
Bailey/Howe Library
Baldwin Memorial Library
Barnet Public Library
Barre Historical Society
Baxter Memorial Library
Bennington Battle Monument
Bennington College
Bennington Free Library
Bennington Museum
Bennington Museum Library
Bent Northrop Memorial Library
Berkshire Historical Society
Berlin Historical Society
Bethel Historical Society
Billings Farm & Museum
Black River Academy & Historical Society
Bradford Public Library
Bradley Law Office State Historic Site
Braintree Historical Society
Bristol Historical Society
Bridport Historical Society
Brooks Memorial Library
Brownell Library
Burke Mtn. Club/East Burke Community Library
Burlington College Library
Burnham Memorial Library
Cabot Historical Society Inc.
Caledonia Probate Court
Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation
Cambridge Historical Society
Carpenter-Carse Library
Castleton Women's Club
Charleston Historical Society
Chelsea Historical Society
Chimney Point State Historic Site
Chittenden Historical Society
Chittenden Public Library
City of Burlington-Clerk/Treasurer Office-City Hall
Cobleigh Public Library
Colchester Historical Society
Corinth Historical Society

Cornish Colony Museum
Cornwall Free Public Library
Danville Historical Society, Inc.
DAR John Strong Mansion Museum
Dorset Historical Society
Dover Historical Society
Duxbury Historical Society, Inc.
East Montpelier Historical Society
Eliot D. Pratt Library
Essex Community Historical Society
Essex County Courthouse
Estey Organ Museum
Eureka Schoolhouse
Fair Haven Probate Court
Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium
Fairlee Public Library
Farrar House - Weston Historical Society
Fletcher Free Library
Fletcher Memorial Library
Gilbert Hart Library
Glover Historical Society
Goodrich Memorial Library
Goshen Town Office
Grand Isle Free Library
Grass Roots Art & Community Effort
Green Mountain Perkins Academy and Historical Soc.
Greensboro Historical Society
Groton Free Public Library
Guildhall Public Library
Guilford Historical Society
Halifax Historical Society
Hartford Historical Society
Hartford Probate Court
Hartland Historical Society
Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home
Historical Society of Peru
Historical Society of Windham County
Holland Historical Society
Hubbardton Battlefield State Historic Site
Hubbardton Historical Society
ILM Historical Society
Jamaica Historical Foundation
Jeudevine Memorial Library
John Woodruff Simpson Memorial Library
Johnson Historical Society
Johnson Public Library
Jones Memorial Library

Jones Memorial Library
 Joslin Memorial Library
 Julien and Virginia Cornell Library
 Justin Morrill State Historic Site
 Kellogg-Hubbard Library
 Kimball Public Library
 Kreitzberg Library - Norwich University
 Landgrove Historical Society
 Lanpher Memorial Library
 Lawrence Memorial library
 Lincoln Library
 Lowell Historical Society
 Lunenburg Historical Society
 main street museum
 Manchester Historical Society
 Mark Skinner Library
 Marlboro Historical Society
 Marshfield Historical Society
 Mendon Historical Society
 Middlebury College
 Middlesex Historical Society
 Middletown Springs History Society
 Middletown Springs Public Library
 Monkton Museum and Historical Society
 Montgomery Historical Society
 Moore Free Library
 Morrill Memorial and Harris Library
 Morristown Centennial Library
 Mount Independence State Historic Site
 Nda Kinna Cultural Center and Museum, Inc.
 Newbury Historical Society
 Norman Williams Public Library
 North Hero Historical Society
 North Hero Public Library
 Northfield Historical Society
 Norwich Historical Society
 Norwich Public Library
 Noyes House Museum
 Old Constitution House State Historic Site
 Orange County Courthouse
 Orleans County Historical Society
 Pawlet Public Library
 Peacham Historical Association
 Peacham Library
 Pioneer Memorial Society
 Pittsfield Historical Society
 Plainfield Historical Society
 Pope Memorial Library
 Porter Music Museum
 Poultney Historical society
 Poultney Public Library
 Pownal Historical Society

President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site
 President Chester Arthur State Historic Site
 Proctor Historical Society
 Proctor Library
 Putney Historical Society
 Richford Historical Society
 Richmond Historical Society
 Robert Frost Stone House Museum
 Robert Hull Fleming Museum, Univ. of Vermont
 Rochester Historical Society
 Rochester Public Library
 Rokeby Museum
 Roxbury Free Library
 Roxbury Historical Society
 Royalton Memorial Library
 Russell Memorial Library
 Russell Vermontiana Collection
 Rutland City Clerk
 Rutland City Department of Public Works
 Rutland City Treasurer
 Rutland Free Library
 Rutland Historical Society
 Rutland Probate Court
 Ryegate Historical Society
 Saint Michael's College Archives
 Sheffield Historical Society
 Shelburne Farms
 Shelburne Museum
 Sherburne Historians
 Shrewsbury Historical Society, Inc.
 South Hero Bicentennial Museum
 South Hero Community Library
 south Londonderry free library
 South Ryegate Public Library
 Springfield Town Library
 Springfield Town Library
 St. Albans Free Library
 St. Johnsbury Academy
 St. Johnsbury Athenaeum
 Stamford Community Library
 Stamford Historical Society
 Sterling College Library
 Stockbridge/Gaysville Historical Society
 Stowe Historical Society
 Stowe Town Clerk
 Strafford Historical Society
 Sullivan Museum & History Center
 Swanton Public Library
 The Nature Museum at Grafton
 The Old Stone House Museum
 The Vermont Music Library & Shop

Theron Boyd State Historic Site
 Thetford Historical Society
 Tinmouth Historical and Genealogical Society
 Topsham Historical Society
 Town Clerk Arlington
 Town of Barre
 Town of Barton
 Town of Belvidere
 Town of Braintree
 Town of Brandon
 Town of Cabot
 Town of Calais
 Town of Corinth
 Town of Corinth
 Town of Craftsbury
 Town of Essex - Town Clerk's Office
 Town of Granville
 Town of Greensboro
 Town of Jericho
 Town of Lincoln
 Town of Maidstone
 Town of Marlboro
 Town of Middlebury
 Town of Milton
 Town of Moretown
 Town of Morristown
 Town of New Haven
 Town of Newbury
 Town of Reading
 Town of Richford
 Town of Roxbury
 Town of Shoreham
 Town of Shrewsbury
 Town of St. George
 Town of St. Johnsbury
 Town of Starksboro
 Town of Stratton, Vermont
 Town of Sudbury/Sudbury Historical Society
 Town of Victory
 Town of Waltham
 Town of Waterford
 Town of Westfield
 Town of Wheelock
 Town of Whiting
 Town of Wilmington
 Townshend Historical Society
 Underwater Historic Preserves
 USS Montpelier Museum
 UVM Physics Department
 Vermont CCC Alumni Association
 Chapter 112
 Vermont Folklife Center

Vermont Historical Society
 Vermont Ski Museum
 Vernon Free Library
 Vershire Historical Society
 Waitsfield Historical Society
 Walden Historical Committee
 Wardsboro Public Library
 Warren Public Library
 Washington Historical Society
 Waterbury Historical Society
 Weathersfield Historical Society
 Wells Village Library
 West Haven Historical Society
 West Rutland Historical Society, Inc
 Westminster District Probate Court
 Westminster West Public Library
 Westminster Historical Society
 Weston Mill Museum/Weston Historical Society
 Whitingham Free Public Library
 Whiting Library
 Wilmington Historical Society
 Windsor Dist. Probate Court
 Windsor Public Library
 Winooski Memorial Library
 Woodbury Community Library
 Woodstock Historical Society

and eighteen other organizations that
 wish to remain anonymous